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ABSTRACT

This yearbook compiles information on research findings on children and youth and media violence, as seen from the perspective of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child. The thematic focus of the yearbook is on the influence of children's exposure to media violence. Section 1 of the yearbook, "Children and Media on the UN and UNESCO Agendas," includes articles on the significance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Section 2, "Children and Violence on the Screen: Research Articles," includes articles on U.S. television violence and children, the nature and context of violence on American television, and media violence in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Europe, and Argentina. Section 3, "Children's Media Situation: Research Articles," contains articles describing children's media access and use in various parts of the world, including Asia, China, Australia, South Africa, and Belgium. Section 4, "Media in the World," provides statistics on children and the media worldwide. Section 5, "Children in the World," details demographic indicators for children worldwide. Section 6, "Children's Participation in the Media: Some Examples," describes examples of positive child participation in the media production process. Section 7 contains international declarations and resolutions regarding children and the media. Section 8 discusses regulations and measures as a basis for building television policy. A bibliography containing

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approximately 300 references on children and media violence published after 1970 completes the yearbook. (KB)

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Children *and* Media Violence

Editors:
Ulla Carlsson and Cecilia von Feilitzen

Yearbook
from the UNESCO
International Clearinghouse
on Children and Violence
on the Screen
1998

PS 027793

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THE CLEARINGHOUSE IS LOCATED AT NORDICOM

Nordicom is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

Nordicom uses a variety of channels – newsletters, journals, books, databases – to reach researchers, students, decision-makers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

Nordicom works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

Nordicom also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

Nordicom is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen

The Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) has set up an international clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen. The Clearinghouse receives financial support from the Government of Sweden and UNESCO.

The Clearinghouse is to contribute to and effectivize knowledge on children, young people and media violence, seen in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The prime task is to make new knowledge and data known to prospective users all over the world.

The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen informs various groups of users – about

- research findings concerning children, young people and media violence,
- ongoing research on children and media violence,
- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- training and courses of study on children and the media,
- positive alternatives to media violence, and
- measures and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence on television, in films, and in interactive media.

The object of the Clearinghouse is three-fold: to attract attention to the question of violence on the screen and its role in the lives of children and young people, to stimulate initiatives and activities to combat gratuitous violence, and to help provide a better basis for policy in the field.

The Clearinghouse is user-oriented, which means that our services are offered in response to demand and are adapted to the needs of our clients.

The Clearinghouse publishes a newsletter and a yearbook.

Children and Media Violence

and Children Media Violence

Editors:
Ulla Carlsson and Cecilia von Feilitzen

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International Clearinghouse
on Children and Violence
on the Screen
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Foreword

Children and young people make up a great part of the population in most parts of the world. Whereas the number of young people in the wealthy countries of the world today will decline in the coming decade, the number of young people in developing countries is steadily increasing. In these countries young people will make up half the population in the year 2000. What kind of society will these children grow up in?

We live in an era of profound and rapid social change – on local, national and international levels. Problems and conflicts of a similar nature are a distressing common denominator in virtually every nation in the world: unemployment, widening income gaps, poverty, pollution, ethnic conflict, inequality of the sexes, and last, but not least, expanding information gaps. All these factors affect children's living conditions and prospects.

A new political and economic world order has become reality during the 1990s. With it has come a new media order, as well. 'Globalization' is a key feature. A far-reaching restructuring of markets around the world has erased or perforated national frontiers in a number of respects. Media of mass communication have been affected greatly; technological advances and deregulation of the telecommunications sector are two factors which have contributed to the globalization of media. Information flows meet ever fewer hindrances. In the new order people all over the world can be reached by sounds and pictures from distant parts of the globe. At the same time, products of mass culture distributed by a few large media corporations, headquartered mainly in the USA, Europe and Japan, reach ever larger audiences in more and more parts of the world. What consequences can we expect the actions of these few global actors to have for cultural identities in communities around the world?

Media content raises important questions. Violence and pornography make strong impressions, and there is considerable concern among parents, teachers and public authorities about the influence violent content may exert on young people's minds. Many discern a relationship between the rising level of violence and crime in everyday life, particularly violence committed by children, and the scenes of violence shown on television and video and simulated acts of violence in video and computer games.

Legislation and voluntary regulation with the intent of setting limits are being discussed in many countries today. Efforts are being made to open channels of dialogue between authorities, the media, and the general public with a view to reaching some form of consensus around basic principles. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, provides an international framework in its Article 17, which relates to the media. The Article states the right of children to information and access to sources, and it speaks of the need to "encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being". Today, voices in various quarters are urging measures to follow up to this principle, letting national experience form a basis for policy discussion in international arenas. Ideas along these lines are, for example, expressed in *Our Creative Diversity*, a report from the World Commission for Culture and Development (UN, UNESCO 1995).

Documents from UNESCO, UNICEF and numerous international conferences on children and the media stress the need for a better understanding of children and mediated violence and point to effective dissemination of existing knowledge as a means toward this end. Better knowledge, it is hoped, will help us avoid stereotypes and simplistic models. On a global basis, a good amount of scientific research on the subject has been done.

Thus, it is not surprising that the idea of establishing an international clearinghouse on the subject of children and media violence was raised on several occasions in the 1990s. The idea received special attention at an international conference on the rights of the child held in Lund, Sweden, in September 1995. The conference was arranged by the Swedish Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the Swedish Committee for UNICEF. The subject was of particular interest to the Swedish Government. In 1996, Nordicom – the Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research – was asked to establish a Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.

In January 1997, Nordicom began setting up the Clearinghouse, which is financed jointly by the Swedish Government and UNESCO. The purpose of the Clearinghouse is to contribute to and effectivize knowledge on children, young people and media violence, seen in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our prime task is to make new knowledge and data known to interested parties all over the world. Knowledge is prerequisite to both fruitful research and constructive policy and practice in an age when the economic and cultural importance of the media already looms large and continues to grow day by day.

The object of the Clearinghouse is thus threefold: to attract attention to the question of violence on the screen and its role in the lives of children and young people, to stimulate initiatives and activities to combat gratuitous violence, and to help provide a better basis for policy in the field.

Toward these ends, the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen informs various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organizations and interested individuals – about

- research findings concerning children, young people and media violence,
- ongoing research on children and media violence,
- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- training and courses of study on children and the media,
- positive alternatives to media violence, and
- measures and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence in the media.

The Clearinghouse collates and documents studies of violent representations in the media, especially televised fiction, in television news and current events programming, in feature films, in video and computer games, as well as in images and texts available via Internet, etc., and other telematic media. The Clearinghouse also documents measures taken to reduce the amount of detrimental violence in the media as well as instances of affirmative action which show positive alternatives to media violence.

This international Clearinghouse is user-oriented, which means that our services are offered in response to demand and are adapted to the needs of our clients. The Clearinghouse should have the character of a 'network central'. Essential to the work of the Clearinghouse is the establishment of an international network with regional hubs around the world.

Three issues of the Clearinghouse Newsletter have been published during 1997. In November 1997, we have more than 1,700 subscribers worldwide. The Newsletter offers news briefs, specialized bibliographies, notices of new publications, abstracts of current research, regional overviews, information about seminars, courses and conferences, etc.

It gives us great pleasure to be able to present this volume, our first Yearbook. It is in two parts, a thematic, discursive section followed by a documentary, descriptive section.

The thematic focus of this first Yearbook rests on research concerning the influences of children's exposure to violence on television. Articles discuss findings on children and televised violence resulting from research undertaken in different parts of the world. We are indeed grateful that so many scholars of international stature have been willing to contribute to the volume. A number of shorter articles describe the media landscape as it relates to children in a variety of countries. The documentary section presents statistics on children and the media, international declarations and resolutions, information about non-governmental organisations, and a selected bibliography.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the scholars and experts who so generously have contributed to the Yearbook and express my appreciation of Dr. Cecilia von Feilitzen, Scientific Coordinator of the Clearinghouse, who edited the book. Thanks also to Pia Hepsever for her technical assistance, which ranged from database and Internet searches to the final 'mise-en-page'. It has been a pleasure working together.

Last, but certainly not least, I should like to thank UNESCO for the financial support which has made this Yearbook possible.

It is our hope that the volume will be useful to a wide range of readers, that it will provide new insights and knowledge, inform policy, stimulate further research, and orient readers to policies and activities that can inspire new initiatives.

Göteborg in February 1998
Ulla Carlsson
Director, Nordicom

Preface by the Assistant Director-General for
Communication, Information and Informatics, UNESCO

Children, Media and Violence

HENRIKAS YUSHKIAVITSHUS

The gains of modern television are at first sight most satisfactory. Films and entertainment programs may be received at the click of a button from all over the world at any time of day. However, often lurking behind the general approval in the face of progress made are deep concerns about the too easy access of young people, especially very young children, to programs portraying gratuitous violence, sex and pornography. The temptation to control in some way this mediatized onslaught, which is not limited to television programs, but readily available in electronic games, cinema films, and audio-visual materials available on the Internet, is very strong.

The critical question here is how to reconcile the precious and fundamental freedom of expression, as set out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as more relevantly put in Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the ways to combat mediatized violence and sex. Article 13 states:

> The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice . . .

The virtual reality of television and its concomitant problems is not the exclusive domain of the industrialized world. Most capital cities and major urban areas of the developing world are on a par with North America and Europe in terms of television access and viewing. However many societies in the developing countries may not yet have reached such advanced stages of modernization. In this [illegible] what young people are watching on television may not yet have been entirely [illegible] by their parents whose own upbringing was without television [illegible] television, and who were brought up according to strict codes of moral behavior.

What then can be done with regard to violence in the media and children's rights? In almost all fora, UNESCO has encouraged self-discipline and self-regulation of the media. UNESCO has also promoted the essential role of public service broadcasters to resist commercial pressures in the determination of media programming; and to ensure the maintenance of proper social and artistic standards. In the Catalan region, a women's association wanted to protest against the showing of lascivious images of women. To do so, they organized a region-wide boycott of the products advertised during such shows, until the television station finally relented and changed the programming. Solutions cannot however come only from the industry or from organized civic groups. Solutions must also come from the family, since it is the family influence that will prevail, or fail, in the long run, and not television. There is the as yet little used power of the audience. People in their own homes can control the events in their own living rooms. They can indeed turn off the TV!

At a time when violence on the screen is attracting increasingly widespread criticism throughout the world, it is important that social and educational institutions around the world join hands in a cooperative effort to understand more deeply why violence creeps into our television sets at home and into the cinemas we frequent weekly or monthly. It is also important that they seek ways to tap positively the advantages of television and the new information technologies so that all can have better access to educational and social opportunities, so that on an equal basis all can benefit from the intellectual resources made available.

The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen at the Göteborg University is a concrete way of 'joining hands'. And many have already 'joined hands' with this initiative. They have done this by contributing their research papers and publications and by supporting the intellectual work of the Clearinghouse.

If we know better what the problem is, and how it is rooted in society and culture, and if we can know this with greater certainty through empirical research, then we can move ahead in seeking the ways to solve the problems that the new audiovisual technologies will confront us with. That is why this International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen has an important role to fulfill in the new global age. It is both our depth probe and our compass point.

Preface by the Representative of Sweden
at the Executive Board of UNESCO

Children Deserve Quality

NILS GUNNAR NILSSON

Two newspaper reports from last fall refuse to fade away.

One is from *The Observer* (26 Oct 97), which tells about a study made in a school in a middle class area of Glasgow. Researchers from the Glasgow Media Group have conducted interviews and discussions with ten twelwe-year-old youngsters in one class, where three of them had seen *Pulp Fiction* once, five between two and five times and two claimed they had seen the film "10 or 11 times".

The children were shown four stills from the movie – two were from the scene where Vincent (John Travolta) and Jules (Samuel Jackson) shoot Bret in his flat, and two stills from the sequence where Vincent accidentally kills Marvin. They were then asked to write down what they remembered of the script in these parts.

What the researchers found was that these kids remembered the dialogue very accurate, word by word more or less. *The Observer* shows part of the actual script side by side with what one of the children remembered, and the difference is very small, indeed. Richard Brooks, media and culture editor of *The Observer* and the author of the article, continues:

> The youngsters regarded Vincent, in particular, and Jules as the 'coolest' characters. They commented on their ability to be in control – even though they lose control by the end of the film – their stylish clothes, the way they talk and their confidence. As one puts it: 'Vincent was cool because he's not scared. He can go around shooting people without being worried.

Greg Philo, author of the report, is cited in the article: "*Pulp Fiction* presents money, power and style as what social life is about. Its values are intensely attractive to many children."

According to Andrea Millwood-Hargrave, research director of the Broadcasting Standards Council, *Pulp Fiction* is currently the most frequently cited cult film in Britain. A study has found that 42 per cent of interviewed 10-to-16-year-olds had seen it.

As a result of this status as a cult film, the John Travolta-phrase "Oh man, I shot Marvin in the face" has become a catchphrase among kids – like Clint Eastwood's "Make my day".

Just think of it: "Oh man, I shot Marvin in the face" – as a message telling that you are cool. Not scared. You, too.

The other report was published by *The Independent* (10 Oct 97) under the head-

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line: *So many cartoons on TV it's not funny*. It reveals that animation now is the dominant type of children's programme on television in Britain, squeezing out traditional dramas and factual programmes. It now accounts for one-third of all children's programmes, compared with 25 per cent five years ago and just 10 per cent in 1981.

Michael Forte, Carlton Television's head of children's programmes, told a meeting of the lobby group Voice of the Listener and Viewer that the increase in animation is due to the "blanket bombing" of British television by American broadcasters. "It is the broadcasting equivalent of plutonium dumping."

A result of this massive "bombing" is that kids, asked about the emergency services telephone number, give the American one, 911, instead of their own, 999.

Anna Home, the highly respected head of BBC Children's Television, who retired last fall, gives her view in an article a few days later in the same newspaper (Oct 12), where she describes the new very competitive scene for children's television, with new American dominated channels like Nikelodeon, the Cartoon Network and Fox Kids. "At best", she concludes, "animation is an art form, but at worst it is crude and simplistic." And she goes on:

> There are armies of super-heroes indistinguishable from each other, most of them exceedingly politically correct. Many of the series come with moral messages, sometimes literally tacked on to the end so they cannot be missed by regulators and parents. However, there is little real characterisation or complexity of narrative.

And Anna Home summarizes her experiences:

> Children are a discerning audience and they deserve quality. Television is one of the most formative and educative influences. It can stimulate creativity, raise awareness and encourage participation. Children want to be active, and they respond to television. They write stories, paint pictures, send e-mail and send money for good causes. Of course, children want to relax and be entertained, but they do not want, nor do they deserve, a non-stop diet of action, adventure and noise. That is the kind of cultural climate which leads to 'dumbing down'.

These are words from a person who knows.

The cheapest trick in entertainment is to play on fear. That's probably one of the reasons why violence is the most frequently used entertainment tool. Just check the morning cartoons or the evening "dramas" on television in any part of the world. In Swedish [illegible] even have a special word for violence as entertainment: *underhållningsvåld*. A pr[illegible]gusting word, but at the same time quite revealing.

[illegible]ragedy is that even children's television is more and more looked upon as a [illegible]d for and dominated by advertisers, instead of being the golden opportunity to reach out to children, stimulate them, inform them, meet their enormous capacity for creativity and empathy. Instead of expanding resources for this kind of programmes, the funds are shrinking. BBC children's programming budget, for instance, has fallen in recent years, according to Anna Home. And cheap animations are filling the screens.

Two newspaper reports, among many, with a similar message: kids are vulnerable. Kids deserve quality. And the media industry don't care. As an industry, it is looking for the bottom line. The profit.

Why shall twelve-year-olds in Glasgow – and all over the world – remember script lines like *Oh man, I shot Marvin in the face* – and use them as a catchphrase?

Oliver Stone, who knows a lot about American media, told recently an audience of students at the Syracuse University: "They (American media) own you and your minds! You have to wake up and realise this!"

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should – in this year of celebration of Human Rights – be revisited and reinterpreted by parents, politicians, teachers, media producers and owners. Among other things the Convention tells us that children have *the right* to take part, being informed – and not being invaded by words and images like *Oh man, I shot Marvin in the face.*

That's why some media professionals met for discussions about *the violence on the screen*, which led to the international conference in Lund, Sweden, in September 1995, where these two elements were connected: *Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child.*

One very concrete outcome of this conference is the yearbook you are just reading, the first from *The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.*

More and more people – parents, politicians, media professionals – are concerned about the effects of globalized media when it comes to the most vulnerable: the children. That's why the Swedish Government strongly supported the idea of a clearingshouse already from the beginning and is locating a substantial amount of money yearly to its work. We need to know more about recent research in the field, about discussions and activities related to this area in different parts of the world. Knowledge is a prerequisite for action.

This is the urgent role of the Clearinghouse at Nordicom: to provide knowledge, to share information. We are looking forward to many years in that capacity – and many yearbooks!

Children and Media on the UN and UNESCO Agendas

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Three Articles Concerning the Media

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
   (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
   (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;

(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;

(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;

(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;

(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

Children and Harmful Influences from the Media

The Significance of the UN Convention[1]

THOMAS HAMMARBERG

Times have indeed changed. Only one or two generations ago, very few children had ever seen images of someone being shot, knifed, blown up or raped in front of their bare eyes. Today most children see such violence on the screen every day, often in gruesome detail. It has been estimated that an average American child now reaching the age of eighteen has witnessed some 18,000 simulated murders on television.

The impact of this mass consumption of violent images is still a matter of deep controversy. There have been individual cases of violent crime apparently inspired by particular films. However, no consensus has been established as to the broader and more precise influence of media violence on child viewers' aggression or violent behaviour; research findings so far have been contradictory.

This should come as no surprise. Research on this topic is genuinely complicated. It has to incorporate broader social and cultural factors; including the role of parents or other guardians. The response to the media violence in the community at large also affects the child. The existence of alternative activities and their character is another important aspect. Needless to say, further research is called for on these topics, including on the indirect and long range impact on a generation growing up in a society affected by this type of ever present media culture.

Such research should ideally be child-centred and based on the one international treaty defining the rights of children in today's world: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This in particular as, no doubt, there are powerful economic interests at play in this discussion.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been ratified by 191 countries by the end of 1997 (all States with the exception of the United States and Somalia), defines certain principles to guide political decision-making affecting the child. It stipulates that such decisions should be taken with the "best interests of the child" as a primary consideration. The opinions of children themselves should be heard. Not only their survival but also their development should be ensured. Finally, there should be no discrimination between children; each child should be able to enjoy his/her rights.

These principles, with their crucial dimensions of both participation and protection, are reflected in the substantive articles of the Convention. One in particular deals with the child and the media (art. 17):

> States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:
>
> (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
>
> (b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
>
> (c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
>
> (d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
>
> (e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

The discussion

This very article was discussed several times during the decade-long drafting process. The original proposal was part of a Polish draft Convention text and much shorter:

> Parents, guardians, State organs and social organizations shall protect the child against any harmful influence that the mass media, and in particular the radio, film, television, printed materials and exhibitions, on account of their contents, may exert on his mental and moral development.

The differences between this first proposal and the final text do indeed reflect the somewhat ideological discussions during the drafting. The Polish wording was seen by several government delegations as too negative towards the media in general, some of them seemed to smell an attitude of censorship. "Western" delegates, in particular, argued for formulations ensuring a free flow of information and that children should be able to take advantage of the diversity of facts and opinions in the media. They also wanted an implicit acknowledgement of the fact that some media were run privately, rather than by the State.

The end result was a clear recognition of the important function of the mass media. The role of the State was to ensure access of children to information and to encourage positive features like dissemination of information which enhance understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (that is the meaning of the reference to article 29 in this context). Furthermore, the State shall encourage children's books as well as information material adapted to the needs of minority and indigenous children. International co-operation on such matters was encouraged. Finally, on the original issue – the protection of children against injurious information and media material – the State should encourage the development of appropriate guidelines.

Let us look closer at the last provision, the one asking for protection. It is not clear from the wording whose responsibility it is to develop guidelines, only that the State should be encouraging. However, one possibility is that the producers themselves or bodies representing them develop such standards. Another option would be that independent, special structures were created for this purpose. As on several other points, the vagueness of the Convention in this regard can be seen as an invitation to a discussion on objectives rather than offering a prescription of precise methods of implementation.

The very nature of the guidelines is also unclear, except for their purpose to protect children. Some indications are given through the references made at the end of the article to other parts of the Convention. One of them (art. 13) defines the freedom of the child to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds regardless of frontiers and type of media. Restrictions, if necessary, should be defined by law and only be justified by the respect of the rights or reputations of others or for the protection "of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals". The implication seems to be that such restrictions could be included in the "appropriate guidelines". However, their clearly limited nature seems to indicate that, in general, other means than censorship should also be tested.

The other reference (art. 18) is about the role of the parents or the legal guardians. They have "the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child". The State shall assist them in their child-rearing responsibilities. This wording is a reflection of the overall attitude in the Convention on the triangular relationship between the child, the guardians and the State: the parents or other guardians are of key importance to child, the State should support them and only in exceptional cases – in the best interests of the child – take positions on how individual children should be reared. In this context the implication is that the guardians have a direct responsibility in protecting the child against harmful media influences and should be supported in this task.

Interpretation

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, set up to monitor the implementation of the Convention, has taken a three-dimensional approach when interpreting article 17:

1) Genuine access

The Committee has stressed the right of children to have access to the media, which also requires that States take proactive steps to make that right real. In this respect, it does not matter whether the media are state-run or private. Financial incentives or other forms of support will still often be necessary to guarantee a supply of children's literature and programmes. This may especially be the case for the production and dissemination of information material in minority languages.

2) Promotion of positive alternatives

The Committee has also asked for proactive measures for the promotion of important values such as, for instance, peace, tolerance, international understanding and respect between the sexes. This could also be seen as a "positive alternative" to the media violence. The media policy itself should complement the school in this regard.

3) Protection against abuse

The UN Committee has not seen a contradiction between child access to information and measures to protect children from negative influences from the media. It emphasises the importance of access but is at the same time deeply concerned about the possible negative impact of media violence.

To encourage meaningful "appropriate guidelines" the authorities need to develop a body of knowledge on patterns of viewing, listening and reading; on what is transmitted; on possible impact on various receivers, in various situations and of various materials; on means of effectively restricting injurious transmissions. In other words: the Committee recommends a comprehensive policy as a basis for the development of guidelines.

The sum is that the State has obligations in relation to all three dimensions and so also in countries where the media are totally private. How do governments of today live up to these ambitions?

Implementation for access

So far, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has completed the scrutiny of 37 country reports and another 26 reports have been received. These reports tell what the governments want to describe as their implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. An analysis of the reports in respect of article 17 is of interest. A number of reports in fact mention nothing or almost nothing about any of the aspects of the article: access, positive alternatives and protection against injurious influences. So was the case with reports from, for instance, Indonesia, Pakistan, Ukraine, Jamaica, Argentina and Paraguay. Cyprus and Chile only made brief references to their Constitutions. The impression left is that there is no deliberate policy or government plans.

Other reports have been more precise. Many of them are detailed on measures taken to encourage dissemination of child-oriented materials through the press, radio and television, video recordings and books. On this point there is obviously a difference between the countries based on economic resources.

The report from Nepal states:

> In the rural areas, children do not have access to the above resources (child literature and broadcasts) due to transportation and communication problems. Education materials are also very expensive. There is little incentive to produce educational materials for children because of the high illiteracy rate. There is also little diversity in the materials available for children, whether they be on TV, radio or in newspapers. The ability to gain something from the media is largely determined by the educational status and literacy levels of children.

The reports from Yemen and Honduras flag similar constraints. However, such concerns are also voiced by some of the countries in transition. In Mongolia the production of child literature has declined sharply due to financial problems. Russia is another example:

> Textbook publishing is ... facing an acute financial crisis. Production costs have recently increased on average by a factor of 10, making textbooks significantly less affordable. ... The acute shortage of children's literature reduces children's interest in learning their native tongues...

Vietnam:

> Shortages of funds have prevented satisfactory expansion in the diversity of children's material available to in the mass media. The number of children's televisions programmes broadcast has fallen over the last two years, and a large number of local libraries have had to close, unable to pay for new books and periodicals.

Both Russia and Vietnam made clear that they could not meet the standards of providing literature in minority languages due to these economic problems. Spain on the other hand, presented an impressive list of data banks made available for young people.

The general trend seems to be that governments are aware of the importance of child media in all its forms, though minority children are in some cases not given sufficient priority. This also goes for deaf and blind children who also need to be ensured information material in appropriate forms and translations.

However, resources are lacking. In fact, this particular area seems to be an important one for international co-operation: economic assistance but also exchange of ideas and experiences. The latter is especially important in view of the great gap in the quality of information material between poor countries and those with higher technological standard.

However, only a few country reports mention the importance of international co-operation. One exception is Portugal:

> The Portuguese authorities attach great importance to international co-operation to facilitate the production, exchange and dissemination of information and documents of social and cultural usefulness for the child.

Implementation of positive alternatives

What has been reported on "positive alternatives", media activities for children which would promote positive values? – In fact, surprisingly little. The report from Namibia, however, contains some clear statements indicating a political approach to the content of media:

> The main objective of government policy on information is to ensure that the media, in addition to fulfilling their traditional roles of public enlightenment, education and entertainment, serve as a catalyst for nation-building and socio-economic development. The National Development Plan 1991/92 stipulates that the mass media must also be deployed to combat ignorance and illiteracy.

In the Philippines a private group, the Philippine Board of Books for Young People, is "propagating love of reading books" among children in activities similar to the remarkable reading campaign organised by the Tamer Institute in the West Bank and Gaza.

In Mexico the General Law on Radio and Television stipulates that programmes for children should stimulate creativity, family integration and human solidarity. Further, they should promote understanding of national values and knowledge of the international community.

Similar legislation is in place in several European countries. In Sweden the Broadcasting Act instructs the programme companies to assert basic ideas of democracy, universal human equality, liberty and dignity of the individual. The effectiveness of this general approach can, however, be questioned. In fact, it seems that the liberal societies have had difficulties to find means of asserting this good values without falling into the trap of formulating State opinions on ideological and political matters. More authoritarian States do not have that problem, though their rhetorics – even when expressing positive values – are not always taken seriously.

One way of making more reality of the intention of the convention in this regard would be to give children and youth more access to the production of information and media material. Experiments in that direction have been encouraging; positive models of child television have been established, for instance, in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Implementation for protection

The reports reflect a stark divide between the industrialised liberal countries and other States on the degree of awareness and on measures taken in relation to harmful impact of media violence. The impression given is that several governments in the South had not had reasons to tackle this problem yet – or had little capacity for it. Some of them seem to be considering steps for moving out of the innocence, one example is Vietnam:

> Another worrying tendency is the increasingly common appearance in the press of items dealing with sex and violence, the justification for this being apparently that items of this sort attract

> more readers, an important consideration in the market-oriented economic conditions of Viet Nam. These items are not suitable for children, but their appearance and children's access to them are difficult to control.

Several countries mention that they have a system of censorship to "protect the child's development and psychological balance" (Burkina Faso) or to ensure that information material "are not harmful to them" (Senegal). The more concrete operations of these systems – and their effectiveness – are not explained in any detail. The reports submitted from the countries in eastern and central Europe also indicate that a more comprehensive policy in this field is indeed lacking.

The reports from Canada and western European countries are, however, detailed and seem to be based on thorough national discussions for some years. Several approaches are tried simultaneously. All of these countries seem to have legislation against certain serious abuses; one example is the report from Germany where "certain representations of violence ... and pornographic materials" are prohibited in the criminal law.

Advertising is restricted. In Spain, for instance, the General Act on Advertising bans publicity which is detrimental to values and rights laid down in the Constitution. Special rules regulate marketing of certain products (e.g. tobacco and beverages) or activities (e.g. betting and games of chance) in order to protect children.

Another common approach is to regulate the timing for the broadcasting of adverts and other material. The idea is that programmes which could be harmful for children be broadcast late in the evenings (when children are supposed to be in bed). This could be stipulated through law, special instructions or voluntary agreements by the media themselves.

In France an independent authority, the Audiovisual Media Board, has been set up to ensure the protection of children in the planning of broadcasts. It has issued guidelines for the television channels and initiated proceedings against violations of them. In the United Kingdom the BBC, the Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority have all established guidelines for the protection of children against material which could harm their mental, moral or physical development:

> Guidelines on children's programmes cover the areas of violence, language and general taste and decency. These guidelines take into account the context of the action and the danger of imitative behaviour by children. In the area of news and factual programmes there is a particular awareness of a child's vulnerability and suggestibility. Broadcasters must also be aware of the dangers to children of programmes which include psychic or occult practices, smoking, drinking alcohol and drug taking.

Furthermore, there is in Britain a special Council established in accordance with the 1990 Broadcasting Act which in its Code of Practice emphasises the protection of children against unsuitable material on television.

The Canadian report says that considerable progress has been made in addressing the problem of violence in the media. This after a 14-year-old girl – whose sister had been robbed, raped and brutally killed – had organised a successful petition campaign for legislation eliminating violence on television:

> In 1993, the Action Group on Violence in Television, which includes broadcasters, cable distributors, pay television and speciality programming services, advertisers and producers, announced a General Statement of Principles to be adhered to by all industry sectors as they strengthen their codes on television violence. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters was the first to have their revised code accepted by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

In countries where there is one strong national broadcasting corporation it may be easier to establish a link between political intention and actual programme policy. The YLE Broadcasting Company in Finland is one example; it has a deliberate policy of avoiding certain violent programmes, gives clear warnings in advance of broadcasting some material and also conducts research studies about their impact.

Several reports refer to the system of age classification for the cinema. One example is Denmark:

> All films to be shown in public are – under the Act of Censorship of Films – to be reviewed and evaluated in relation to an audience of children and young persons. At the moment there are two age limits as to prohibition, i.e. 12 years and 16 years, and in addition to this an age limit of 7 years is intended as a guide.

In some countries these limits also depend on whether the child go with an adult or is unaccompanied. A particular problem has been how to cope with the expanding film market. This is illustrated through another quote from the Danish report:

> A revision of the censorship of films is being considered, one of the reasons being the ever-increasing supply of films on TV and the video market which are not covered by the Act on Censorship in force.

In Finland commercial videos are subject to the same censorship procedures as cinema films. In France the approach is similar:

> ...video cassettes offered for rental or sale must indicate on their packaging any prohibitions linked to the issue of the certificate of release for the work.

The most comprehensive overall approach seems to have been taken by *Norway* – after the submission of their report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In March 1995 the government issued a national plan of action against violence in the visual media.[2] This was a joint initiative by the ministries of culture and justice – with the co-operation of two other ministries: the ministry for child and family affairs and the ministry for church affairs, education and research. The plan says that even if only a small minority of young people are influenced by violent media consumption the consequences could still be serious. It also concludes that social and cultural poverty increases the risks and it emphasises the preventive efforts, not least within the school.

The Norwegian plan proposes some legal precisions to include also, for instance, the video games. Its emphasis though is on assisting children and parents to make informed choices. The plan seeks to mobilise viewers and consumers to use their power and express opinions about the supply. Another ambition with the plan is that those who transmit extreme violence on the screen be held responsible. Another major aspect, again, is that networks and alliances have been built to develop knowledge and reactions against media violence.

A special secretariat has been established to monitor the implementation of the Norwegian plan; a co-ordinating committee between the ministries has also been set up as well as an advisory council of experts. There will be annual reports to the parliament.

The Norwegian approach seems to be unusually thorough and conscientious. However, the impression of the country reports from the industrialised countries, in general, is one of awareness and deep concern. The guidelines for television, including on broadcasting hours, which exist in a number of countries, may not always be respected and, moreover, seem not to stem the high *volume* of violence hour after hour. A particular problem is the *news reporting* which sometimes is illustrated with violent images, the impact of which may be even stronger than abusive fictions.

Voluntary guidelines for the press do exist in several countries; in several cases their implementation is monitored by a Press Council which is set up, wholly or partly, by the press institutions themselves. These, however, tend to focus more on the protection of children being reported upon, than on problems related to the publishing of material harmful to young readers.

The total impression of the reports from the industrialised countries is one of awareness and deep concern. The guidelines for television, including on broadcast hours, may not always be respected and, moreover, seem not to stem the high volume of violence hour after hour. A particular problem is the news reporting which sometimes is illustrated with violent images, the impact of which may be even stronger than abusive fictions.

The exploding market of videos for sale or rental have created new problems in making a distinction between child and adult consumption. Classified descriptions of the content on the package, which offer a kind of violence rating, can be of some help to parents but probably do not protect all children in real life. Computer games of a violent nature raise similar problems.

Conclusions

1. The Convention stresses both the right to access to information and the right to be protected against harmful material. This combined approach – especially if access is broadened through proactive initiatives, for instance for minority children – seems essential for the development of a comprehensive policy on children and media. Effective incentives for the production of positive material for children may be as effective as trying to limit the negative ones.

2. Some countries have indeed developed a variety of approaches in this field in what appears to be a deliberate policy. However, there seems to be little international co-operation to support the less resourceful countries with means and advice for access as well as prevention. In fact, also the richer States may benefit from further exchange on, for instance, how to develop techniques to get the information producers to respect the rights of the child.

3. The Convention gives no guidance on what type of violence in the media should be regarded as harmful; the interpretation on this delicate matter also varies between countries. Extreme instances tend to be criminalised, but the grey zone can be wide. Regulations – voluntary or mandatory – on certain hours for broadcasting or ages for entry to cinemas seem to have had some positive effect as have advice to parents. New methods of protection are needed in connection with videos and computer programmes consumed in the homes.

4. The discussion on media violence have to include a broader perspective on how children now spend their day. The media problem is augmented by the fact that many children spend more time in front of television than in school and that their time with the parents is reduced. For instance, many children do not have an adult present to explain violent images in the news and to put these into an understandable context. This recent social pattern raises a number of fundamental questions which seem not to be sufficiently addressed in several countries. It also, again, stresses the importance of high quality output on the screen, "positive alternatives".

5. Governments need to take corrective measures to avoid effects of market forces which violate the "best interests of the child": through legislation, initiating independent monitoring but also through proactive steps to encourage alternatives. However, the problem of demand remains. Concerned citizens should make clear their opinions to the producers – as was made in Canada in response to the appeal from the 14-year-old girl – that exploitation of violence will no longer be a lucrative market.

Notes

1. The article is an update of a paper published in *Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child. Report from a seminar in Lund, Sweden, September 1995*, Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, No. 2, 1996, pp. 162-177.
2. *Regjeringens Handlingsplan mot Vold i Bildemediene* can be ordered from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Media Department, PO Box 8030, 0030 Oslo. There is also an English version: *The Norwegian Government's Campaign to Combat Violence in the Visual Media.*

The Child and the Media

A Report From the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

THOMAS HAMMARBERG

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child met on 7 October 1996 for a general discussion on the issue of "the child and the media". The Committee had invited representatives of United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies, other competent bodies, including non-governmental organizations, media representatives, research and academic organizations and children, to contribute to the discussions and provide expert advice.

By way of introduction, the Committee expressed the view that, as with human rights in general, the press and other media have essential functions in promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of the child and in helping to make reality of the principles and standards of the Convention. The Committee also expressed the view that the media could play a pivotal role in monitoring the actual realization of the rights of the child.

Special reference was made to the "image" of the child given by the media, which can either create and convey respect for children and young people or spread prejudices and stereotypes which may have a negative influence on public opinion and politicians. Reference was also made to the protection of the privacy of the child by the media, in reporting about, for instance, involvement in criminal activities, sexual abuse or family problems, and to the protection of children against information that may have negative and harmful impact on them, primarily programmes containing brutal violence and pornography. Finally, reference was made to the role of the media in offering children the possibility to express themselves.

The Committee identified three main areas to be considered during the debate:

- *Child participation in the media*
  In short, the discussion here centred around the importance of children participa-

ting not just as commentators, but at all levels of the information and media production process. Therefore, adequate mechanisms must be developed to enable the child to participate. Not only the media as such but also parents and professionals working with and for children must help children to make their voices heard. Among many other things mentioned, the potential positive impact of technology for children's rights was underlined, as well as the importance of their access also to all traditional media.

- *Protection of the child against harmful influences through the media*
  It was said, that States should take concrete measures to encourage the media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child, as called for in article 17(a). The clear identification of harmful influences in media was considered essential, as well as the need to raise, through school and other fora, the awareness of children on how to tackle media issues in a critical and constructive manner. Also, a better balance ought to be reached in the media between concern for protection and accurate reflection of the real world. A better balance is needed, too, regarding cultural diversity and gender bias. It was recognized that freedom of expression was not incompatible with the strong prohibition of material injurious to the child's well-being. Specific reference was also made to Internet, for example, the idea to develop in all countries hot-lines where Internet users can transmit information on existing harmful sites.
- *Respect for the integrity of the child in media reporting*
  In short, it was stressed that media play an essential role in the promotion and protection of human rights in general, and should be particularly vigilant in trying to safeguard the integrity of the child. For example, media must take into account the best interests of the child when children are sources of information, as in interviews or simulations with child victims of violence and abuse. Reference was also made to the most common stereotypes in media reporting about children, such as the "violent teenager" or the misrepresentation of children from specific groups.

On the basis of the discussions on the three areas and in my capacity as rapporteur of the meeting, I formulated the following recommendations:

1. *Child media:* A dossier should be compiled on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in media, like 'Children's Express' in the United Kingdom and the United States.
2. *Child forum within Internet:* The UNICEF-initiated 'Voices of Youth' at the World Wide Web should be further promoted and advertised as a positive facility for international discussion on important issues between young people.
3. *Active child libraries:* The experience of dynamic child libraries, or child departments within public libraries, should be documented and disseminated.
4. *Media education:* Knowledge about media, their impact and functioning should be taught in schools at all levels. Students should be enabled to relate to and use

the media in a participatory manner as well as to learn how to decode media messages, including in the advertising. Good experiences in some countries should be made available to others.

5. *State support to media for children:* There is a need for budgetary support to ensure the production and dissemination of children's books, magazines and papers; music, theatre and other artistic expressions for children as well as child oriented films and videos. Assistance through international co-operation should also support media and art for children.
6. *Constructive agreements with media companies to protect children against harmful influences:* Facts should be gathered about various attempts of voluntary agreements with media companies on positive measures such as not broadcasting violent programmes during certain hours, clear presentations before programmes about their content and the development of technical devices – like 'V-chips' – to help consumers to bloc out certain types of programmes. Likewise, experiences of voluntary ethical standards and mechanisms to encourage respect for them should be assembled and evaluated; this should include an analysis of the effectiveness of existing Codes of Conduct, professional guidelines, Press Councils, Broadcast Councils, Press Ombudsmen and similar bodies.
7. *Comprehensive national plans of action to empower parents in the media market:* Governments should initiate a national discussion on means to promote positive alternatives to the negative tendencies in the media market, to encourage media knowledge and support parents in their role as guides to their children when relating with electronic and other media. An international workshop should be organized to promote a discussion on this approach.
8. *Advice on implementation of article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:* A study should be conducted with the purpose of developing advice to governments on how they could encourage the development of 'guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being'. Such a study should also serve the purpose of assisting the Committee on the Rights of the Child in drafting a General Comment on article 17.
9. *Specific guidelines for reporting on child abuse:* To encourage further discussions in the news rooms and within the media community as a whole guidelines should be drafted by relevant journalist bodies on how to report on abuse of children and at the same time protect the dignity of the children involved. Special emphasis should be placed on the issue of not exposing the identity of the child.
10. *Handbook material for journalist education on child rights:* Material should be produced to assist journalist and media schools on child rights standards, established procedures for child rights monitoring, existing international, regional and national institutions working with children as well as basic aspects of child development. The manual planned by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights as a tool for journalist education on human rights should be widely disseminated when produced.

11. *Network for media watchgroups:* The positive experiences of media watchgroups in various countries should be further encouraged and 'good ideas' transferred between countries. The purpose is to give media consumers a voice in the discussion on media ethics and children. A focal point for exchanges should be established.
12. *Service to 'child rights correspondents':* Interested journalists should be invited to sign in to a list of 'Child Rights Correspondents'. They should receive regular information about important child issues, interesting reports by others and be seen as media advisers to the international child rights community.

A working group met on April, 14, 1997 to consider constructive ways of ensuring implementation of the twelve recommendations and other proposals made during the discussion. Authorities, organizations and individuals are welcome with further suggestions to Paolo David, Centre for Human Rights, United Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Schweiz.

Youth and Communication

Carlos A. Arnaldo & Åsa Finnström

We are living today in a young world. More than half of the world's population is under the age of 29, and even younger in some of the developing regions still marked by high birth rates and multi-million populations.

But if this demographic information is true, it can be asked why so little television programming is relevant to young people? Why is TV oriented more towards violence, often gratuitous violence: the use of violence to express power or authority over others, violence as "the right way" to solve problems and conflict, violence for the sake of violence, even violence for fun? One might also ask, is TV merely reflecting the violence that already exists in the world, or is TV provoking its viewers to increased violence? And is this why we still have wars, genocide and ethnic butchering?

In a more constructive spirit we could ask how we can help young people to understand and use media? How could they participate audio-visually and electronically in the world debate, to create "young media space," as urged by the United Nations World Forum of Youth in Vienna, November 1996?

UNESCO is concerned with these questions which directly affect young people in today's society, those who will continue to build democracy in our traces. These issues are also intimately bound with our mandate: the founding states promised in the UNESCO Charter that they would "save succeeding generations from the scourges of war". UNESCO is also concerned about protecting the young, and especially the very young children from gratuitous violence, sexual exhibition, pornography and paedophilia. But in doing this, states should not formulate extreme measures of regulation in violation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nor of Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which contains the analogous formulation for children:

> The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice…

Seen from a holistic perspective, it is also necessary to appreciate the familiar, social and cultural factors that determine a child's psychological disposition and lay the foundations for understanding how youth see and act in their world. Ironically, much of today's research is pointing to a world-wide breakdown in the family, the school and the community.

UNESCO: new perspectives

Conscious of these difficulties, UNESCO has initiated an action theme on communication and the young, to review the factors concerning violence on the screen, to promote dialogue among the actors concerned, and to encourage young people to become critical and conscious users of media and producers of media messages. In this section, we present the earlier activities in order to better appreciate the gains made in 1997.

The round table of New Delhi

In April 1994 UNESCO, with the co-operation of the Indian Permanent Delegation and National Commission and with the financial support of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), convened a small round table of heads of public television. This brought together Doordarshan in India and All India Radio, China Central Television, Indonesian Television, the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC, Singapore), BBC, United Kingdom, TV5, France, and CNN, USA.

The report of the Chairman of IPDC, Mr Torben Krogh, reflected professional concerns: restrictive legislation or other forms of control by governments or external bodies were both undesirable and ineffective in reducing violence; television broadcasters themselves should set up guidelines and impose self-discipline to adhere to them; public national broadcasting was considered the principal means for counteracting imported TV violence; financial and technical means to improve and increase national indigenous television production should be reinforced.[1]

Non-violence and television also became the subject for discussion at the IPDC thematic debate[2] in January 1996. Papers were delivered by Hervé Bourges, President of the Supreme Broadcasting Council, France; S.K. Kapoor, Director-General of Doordarshan Television, India, and Colin Shaw, Director of the Broadcast Standards Council, UK. This Council also prepared a survey of selected TV organisations on how guidelines are drawn up and implemented by the industry.

Conference of Lund

From 26-27 September 1995 in the medieval city of Lund in Sweden, UNESCO co-operated with the Swedish National Commission of UNESCO in organising the International Conference on Violence on the Screen and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[5] This forum gathered some 150 media producers and managers, researchers, journalists, politicians and teachers to discuss the threats to young audiences confronted by violence on TV and film screens as well as in electronic games.

The participants discussed the social effects of screen violence on young people; the aggravation of this situation by too easy access to programmes through cable and dish; electronic games appealing to baser instincts; and the too facile portrayal of pornography and child sex through multi-media techniques on world data systems such as Internet.

Participants were convinced that beyond violence on the screen, one must also examine the growing social impact of the information revolution and the new techno-economic paradigm it presupposes. They were also concerned that the only law to prevail would be the law of the market, that is, whatever makes money is produced and distributed. They supported the essential role of public service broadcasting to limit commercial pressures on media programming, to ensure proper social and artistic standards, and to reduce screen violence. While many urged the need to encourage self-regulation of the media, many referred to the words of the UNESCO Director-General concerning the as yet unused power of the audience, that "We can indeed turn off the TV!" In support of this, other participants held that the solutions must come not only from the industry but from within the family, since it is the family influence that in the long run will prevail or fail, and not television.

A very concrete outcome of the Lund seminar was the decision to set up an international clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen.

World youth forum

From 11 to 13 September 1996, non-governmental organisations, teachers and students gathered under the banner of the International Union of Family Organizations in Montreal. This was *Prepcom*, a colloquium to prepare inputs to the UN World Forum on youth to be held in Vienna, Austria, later in the year. UNESCO contributed the keynote paper on communication and youth, which sought to present the reasons why there is a communication gap between the young and the older generation; why one of the hardest things in the modern world is to speak to one's own children, and why parents find it impossible to bequeath what they believe are the lasting values of life: hard work, honesty, a solid education, good upbringing. The approaches made by adults are not only a question of education, but need to include efforts to listen as well as to speak, to learn as much as to teach, to appreciate rather than merely condemn. The paper asked whether there is not only a generation gap, but a communication gap. Is communication the problem or rather the solution?

UNESCO also participated in the UN World Youth Forum in Vienna, 21-25 November 1996, and assisted the young participants in the formulation of two projects, *UN Cafés* and *Young media space*.

UNESCO, children and the media in 1997

Many of the activities concerning children and violence on the screen initiated earlier, and often in partnership with UNESCO National Commissions, universities, NGOs and research groups bore fruit in 1997.

Forum on youth and media tomorrow

Over and beyond the question of violent content in the media, a more piercing question is how young people use media: in what situations, for what purposes and also how they perceive what they see and hear. The international forum of researchers in Paris 21 to 25 April 1997, *Youth and the Media – Tomorrow*, tried to grasp this wide field. More than 350 researchers participated and over 60 papers were proposed. Organised by the Groupe de Recherche sur la Rélation Enfants/Médias (GRREM) with UNESCO's intellectual and financial contribution, the forum surveyed the current situation and trends of research concerning the relationship between young people and the media, and sought through round tables to enlighten those with the power to act. The forum showed among other things that the relationship of children to television is much more complex than the general field of research has so far led us to believe.

During the forum attention was paid to the fact that the variety of national contexts and media systems has led researchers to pose questions in different ways. Researchers from different countries also stressed the apparent fixation of much of North American research to focus only on violence. This was also found to distract attention from the larger and more complicated psycho-cultural context in which violent dispositions are formed. It was also shown that there is new research in the U.S. with more contextual variables to modify certain media effects.

Several papers demonstrated how social and educational institutions are carrying learning programmes to introduce young people to understanding, criticising and using the mass media, photography, radio, video or Internet. As requested by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, a preliminary report[4] was drawn up summarising these 'best practices'. These will be further compiled with inputs from other specialised agencies and NGOs.

Scout survey: young people's perception of violence on the screen

The World Organization of the Scout Movement completed the field work for the survey of *Young people's perception of violence on the screen.* This was under the supervision of Jacques Cassaigneau and Mateo Jover. Young scouts, and local partners, administered questionnaires in 23 countries. Over 5,000 questionnaires have been tabulated, analysed and reviewed for conclusions by Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel of the University of Utrecht. A summary report[5] of four pages is available in French and in English; in addition a longer, 20 page report is available in English.[6] The final comprehensive report is scheduled for publication in 1998.

More than 5,000 12-year-old pupils from 23 countries selected from the entire range of the Human Development Index (1994 data but as reported in the UNDP

Human Development Report of 1997) participated, thus contributing more than 250,000 data. These young people had no particular organisational bonds, came from both urban and rural background, high and low aggression areas, high and low technology countries. This means that this survey is the largest of its kind ever conducted on this subject and in a comprehensive manner.

The survey shows that television is an ever present medium in all the areas surveyed and that children spend more time before the TV (average of 3 hours) than with any other medium (radio or books) or any other single activity including homework. Almost everyone sampled knows *Terminator, Rambo* or names a favourite local hero as a main model. Overall this means that many children are surrounded by an environment where "real" and media experiences both support the view that violence is natural. A violent hero like *Terminator* seems to represent the characteristics which children think are necessary to solve difficult situations. The fascination with violence is often related to heroes who are rewarded for their actions because they can cope with every problem. Violence on the screen thus becomes attractive as a model for solving real life problems and thus contributes to a global aggressive culture.

But violence on the screen is not the only factor. The study cautions: "It is crucial to identify the impact of the children's personality, their actual environment, experience with aggression, family circumstances and cultural context. These are the fundamental conditions which determine a person's disposition for violence." The report also proposes recommendations for further public debate among the concerned actors, and reinforcement of media education to promote a critical posture among media-consumers. It points to the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen as a resource for working out solutions to this social problem.

Clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen

Up to now it has been almost impossible to undertake new research or even review the researches already published because there has been no single resource facility to collect, analyse and disseminate information on the subject of children, violence on the screen and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is why the Lund Conference urged the setting up of such a clearinghouse and the Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) at University of Göteborg in Sweden, was proposed for this task. Nordicom has already had a long experience of co-operation and strengthening of links among researchers within the Nordic countries but also with other parts of the world.

The guiding framework for this work is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in which Article 13 deals with freedom of expression of children and Article 17 covers the child and the media. The Convention stresses the need of children to have access to information but also urges that appropriate guidelines be drawn up for the protection of the child from injurious content.

The primary objectives of the Clearinghouse are to highlight the question of violence on the screen related to young persons, to stimulate initiatives and activities to combat gratuitous violence, and to promote a better basis for policy formulation in this domain. The data collected by the Clearinghouse will be available through internationally accessible databases to researchers, media professionals and other specialists concerned. Information is also circulated on a regular basis in printed form in a newsletter, and particularly through the Yearbook. The Swedish Government and UNESCO both support the Clearinghouse.

Conclusions

From all these actions, certain conclusions begin to stand out:

1. The relation between violence in the media and violence in reality is not very well understood in all its complexity. Too much attention has been paid to strictly causal relations (very difficult to demonstrate) rather than to understanding the whole process of young people's cognitive learning and how they form attitudes and lifelong positions. This was cited several times during the UNESCO/GRREM forum of researchers in April 1997 on *Youth and the Media – Tomorrow*. It was also confirmed empirically in the 23-country survey on children's perceptions of violence on the screen.
2. While there may be an increasing amount of violence portrayed in the media, one also needs to examine the supportive role of society as a whole (family, school and community) as these will likely have a greater influence on individual behaviour than just the TV set. And therefore remedies might well be sought in this larger context of society rather than in the media alone.
3. Protection of the young is important, but not at the expense of universal rights, particularly the right to freedom of expression. The right to freedom of expression is an individual and inalienable right, and serves as the foundation of democracy.
4. In taking programme decisions, audio-visual industry managers, as well as various audio-visual entertainment industries and distributors, should work in a spirit of self-discipline and where possible according to guidelines worked out by the professionals themselves.

And from this, some seemingly paradoxical working hypotheses appear to emerge:

1. The media are deeply influenced by market forces. But well-articulated societal goals and the active pursuance of these goals can raise the quality of media productions. This is all the more so if these goals are supported by informed groups concerned to protect both civil freedoms and the interests of children;
2. That the more the media are free and self-disciplined, the more effectively they can contribute to the social, educational and cultural goals that society sets itself;
3. That the question of child participation in the media is linked with the larger question of effective participation of children in society as a whole – in particular, the child's place in the home and in school;
4. That far more research is needed to clarify the potential contribution or damage

which popular media may bring to the psychological well-being and education of children. And therefore the role of a clearinghouse is all the more relevant.

What is at issue, finally,
is the ability of society as a whole
to make informed choices
about the type of media it wants.

Notes

1. Torben Krogh, *Non-violence, Tolerance and Television*, Report of the Chairman of the International Programme for the Development of Communication. Paris: UNESCO, 1995. Also available in French.
2. UNESCO, Report of the International Programme for the Development of Communication, 17th Session. Paris: UNESCO, January 1997.
3. *Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child.* Report from a seminar in Lund, Sweden. Stockholm: Svenska Unesco-rådets skriftserie nr 2, 1996.
4. Carlos A. Arnaldo and Helle Jensen, *Helping Young People Learn Media: a preliminary compilation of best practices.* Paris: UNESCO, 1997.
5. Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel, *Young People's Perception of Violence on the Screen: A joint project of UNESCO, the World Organization of the Scout Movement.*
6. See the article by Jo Groebel in this Yearbook.

Children and Violence on the Screen

Research Articles

Introduction

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Scientific Co-ordinator of the Clearinghouse

Children and violence on the screen

The debate about media violence has fluctuated heavily at the same time as the media have been introduced and spread. In the context of this debate, different media have been more or less in focus during different periods – from books, popular press and film in earlier centuries, to radio, comics, national TV, video, mediated music and satellite-TV during the course of the 20th century, to digital and so-called interactive media such as electronic games, the Internet and "virtual reality" now as we approach the millennium.

But whereas indignant voices are more seldom raised about violence in the print and audio media today, the concern for violence in the visual media has remained. As a consequence, the research on media violence that started in the 1920s and has been intensified during later decades, has, above all, applied to film and television, with the addition, during the last fifteen years, of studies on video, electronic games and Internet.

With more media, the amount of media violence has increased. This is due not only to the cumulative effects of the creation of new media, but also to the increased competition between the media and their globalisation and privatisation. Compared to the field of media and telecommunications, since the 1980s, hardly any other area has experienced such rapid globalisation, record growth and concentration of power. The market is now dominated by a minority of extensive conglomerates or of whole commercial worlds. U.S.-based conglomerates are the largest and most numerous, but there are also considerable transnational enterprises based in Asia and the partly deregulated Europe (Herman & McChesney 1997).

The fact that the U.S. distributes most of the media violence in the world, leads, among other things, to the circumstance that American programmes on German television contain four times as much violence as the German programmes, according to a content analysis (Groebel & Gleich 1993). In a Swedish content analysis of all programmes except the news on six TV channels (Cronström & Höijer 1996), 62 per cent of the violent time (i.e., pure sequences of violence) consisted of violent scenes of U.S. origin. In this case, the sequences of violence in trailers were not taken into account; they made up 15 per cent of the total violent time. Since trailers often are advertisements for coming action films and the like, one can estimate that about 70 per cent of the violent time might have been of U.S. origin.

The concentration of media ownership is not only valid for television programmes, video and cinema films, but also for comics, electronic games, etc. Thus, this power concentration does not result in manifoldness, cultural variation and freedom of expression where most people can be heard, but in one-sidedness and a kind of private censorship.

Many countries are worried about the one-sidedness of imported programmes and films which they can not counterbalance with own production, although it is, of course, impossible to generalise between nations, as conditions and prerequisites are different (e.g., Japan and India export many TV programmes and films to other Asian countries; Brazil many programmes in Latin America; Australia several programmes to Asia and English-speaking countries, etc.). One example is the situation in former Eastern Europe. Here the relief felt after the liberation from censorship, after the collapse of the Wall in 1989, has been obscured by the surprise and distaste currently experienced by parts of the population due to the flood of violent and pornographic programmes and films pouring over the nations' boarders. More and more, voices urging for media legislation have been raised there (see, e.g., Larsson 1997, Minichová 1997), and new national rules and laws about media violence, passed in the 1990s, exist in most Eastern European countries (Irving & Tadros 1997).

At the same time, it is important to note that persons, on the average, prefer to watch TV programmes without violence, at least according to an American analysis (Gerbner 1997). From many nations in the world, it is also reported that the average inhabitant prefers to watch home-produced programmes, if there are home-produced alternatives – national soap operas, national fiction, etc. (Goonasekera 1995, Sancho 1995, Lamb 1997). However, such alternatives are often lacking or are few. Drama and fiction are expensive to produce and, in most countries, expenditures can not be expected to result in big export incomes, as in the U.S. which dominates world export.

What drives media violence, then, is not primarily popularity but global marketing (Gerbner 1997). Concentration of media ownership also makes it difficult for newcomers, smaller firms and alternative production companies to succeed on the home market. They are therefore forced into the video branch and foreign sales. Their products need a dramatic ingredient that requires no translation and fits as many cultures as possible. That ingredient is often violence. A study in the U.S. indicated that American programmes exported to other countries contain more violence than American programmes shown in the U.S. (Gerbner 1997).

This all means, among other things, that almost 90 per cent of 12-year-old school children are acquainted with violent action characters such as *Terminator* and *Rambo*, according to a global study in 23 countries (see the article in this book by *Jo Groebel*).

In some nations, not least the Western ones, criminological research indicates that violence in society has increased during the latest decades. Furthermore, statistics have recently been published showing that violence has become more common among children under 15 years of age.

What, then, does research say about the relationship between media violence and violence in society? This is the theme of the first section of research articles – *Children and Violence on the Screen* – in this book.

It must be stressed that research about media violence is most unevenly distributed in the world. Such research has primarily been done in countries with plenty of media – in North America and, next, Western Europe (more often in Northern than Southern Europe), as well as in Japan and Australia. Overviews of such research results are presented in the book by *Ellen Wartella, Adriana Olivarez and Nancy Jennings*, USA, *Barbara Wilson and her team*, USA, *Sachiko I. Kodaira*, Japan, and *Kevin Durkin and Jason Low*, Australia. The two last-mentioned overviews also deal with the still relatively scanty research on video and computer games. In most other countries, studies about media violence are fewer or lacking. Interesting examples of existing studies are, however, given in the book by *Dafna Lemish*, Israel, and *Tatiana Merlo-Flores*, Argentina.

Taken together, the articles show that it is difficult to generalise the research results across different countries and cultures. As *Olga Linné*, UK, stresses in her discussion of the research development in Europe, each country must therefore be given the opportunity to carry out research on its own terms and within its own cultural context. As does the Japanese contributor Sachiko Kodaira in the book, I would also like to emphasise that far more future research on children and the media must be performed on an international level, i.e., comparatively and in various countries simultaneously, in order to gain a proper understanding of the role of media, and media violence, in children's lives. Kodaira mentions one of several concrete examples in this connection: Comparative content analyses of violent portrayals in Japanese and U.S. television have shown, that although media violence is extensive in both cultures, it is represented in different ways. Among other differences, violence in Japanese as compared to U.S. dramas is much more often followed by scenes showing the after-effects of violence on victims and the process of their suffering. This factor, in combination with the different societal contexts, could possibly be of importance for the fact that causal relationships between TV violence and aggression among viewers have been found in the U.S. but not in Japan.

Apart from the cultural and national variation in research which limits researchers' abilities to generalise and summarise results, many journalists, TV producers, politicians, teachers, parents, etc., in the public debate in each single country often perceive the research results on the influences of media violence as being "contradictory" or that "the researchers are at odds". I do not think that these perceptions represent the truth of the matter. The situation is, rather, that even different studies within a given country are performed in different contexts – the studies have varying aims, perspectives and questions as starting points and elucidate, consequently, different parts of the complex of problems. Neither can any study comprise "the whole reality". Further, different viewers receive different impressions from media violence. On thinking it over and after a more careful analysis, the perspectives and the results complement each other as do the pieces in a puzzle. At the same time, it is a question of understanding that reality is complicated and that the media only are one part of people's environment, of culture and society. Media are not, and can not be, the sole and/or direct cause of influence but function within a nexus of other decisive factors.

As regards the different research *perspectives*, research on media violence has – as does other social scientific and human research – among other things, its roots in the basic philosophical question about human beings' free will. To what degree are we products of the environment – of parents, school, peers, media, religion and social structure – and to what degree do we choose and act independently? Even if most people agree that both elements play a role, some of us lay greater stress on the role of *structure* and others greater stress on the role of the *agent*. This is valid for researchers, too. Some, therefore, analyse how we are *influenced* by media violence (in interplay with the rest of the environment). Others, instead, illustrate how we (having different needs, motives, conflicts and interests) *choose and use* media violence. But these perspectives are not in themselves contradictory; they highlight different aspects of the existential circumstances of human beings and lie, therefore, on different places on the theoretical map. Thus, the researchers contributing to this book also have different theories, besides the fact that their research has been carried out in differing national contexts.

There is, thus, no contradiction in the fact that certain persons actively search out media violence to, e.g., get excitement, become fascinated, express their masculinity, experience power on a symbolic level, try to strengthen their identity in protest against the adult world, get compensation for conflicts in their personal relations, etc. – while others get impressions of negative art. Different children, young people and adults react differently. Also, the same person reacts differently on differing occasions. He or she can even simultaneously seek media violence and be influenced by it in an intricate interplay.

Similarly, different studies investigate different *types of influence*. In those countries where much research has been done, one can discern various such unwanted influences of media violence as, for example, *imitation*; *getting "tips" and models about how violence can be used*; *aggression*; *fear; anxiety and uneasiness about a threatening surrounding*; *biased conceptions about violence in society*; and *habituation to media violence*. There are also complicated relationships between these types of influences. It is, for instance, likely that for some individuals media violence has contributed to feelings of fear, misconceptions about real violence, and experiences of threatening surroundings that, in a situation of crisis, can turn into destructive aggression (for a more detailed analysis of negative and positive consequences of media violence, see von Feilitzen 1993).

Generally, children and media violence should also be seen in a wider perspective. Research has mostly defined media violence as the physical, manifest violence on the screen, and this is primarily valid also for the articles in this book. There are, however, other forms of symbolic and structural oppression and misuse of power that are at least as essential. We hope to come back to such definitions in later Clearinghouse publications. Here, I will restrict myself to only a couple of examples: The fact that children are heavily under-represented in the media output as a whole, is a symbolic oppression of children. They are seldom seen, their voices are seldom heard, and adult media characters seldom talk about them. With the spread of commercial satellite television, this under-representation of children seems to have been reinforced, and when children now appear in the media contents they seem to be more often portrayed to support adult roles than in their own rights. The only medium where children seem to be frequently represented is advertising. This is in line with the fact that children and young people have from a Western *societal* viewpoint (disregarding their value for the parents), a primarily economic-consuming function (von Feilitzen in progress).

The area of children and media violence also includes those cases where children are at the mercy of media news – when they are portrayed as victims of violence, abuse, catastrophes and starvation without respect for their integrity. Children and media violence also includes child pornography.

Children's media situation

It is important to emphasise that children are not a small minority group "on the side". If we – in keeping with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – by children mean all persons under the age of 18, they constitute approximately 37 per cent of the total world population.

Children are unevenly distributed across the various countries. Estimates indicate that, on the average, children under 18 in richer countries make up ca. 24 per cent of the population and in the developing countries ca. 40 per cent of the population. In certain countries the population is composed of up to 55 per cent children (see *the statistical section Children in the World* in this book).

The uneven distribution of children in the world becomes clearer, if we leave adults out of the picture: Of the more than two billion children on the globe, ca. 13 per cent live in the richer countries and ca. 87 per cent in the developing countries (UNICEF 1997).

Children's access to TV and other media is very unevenly distributed, too – but in a diametrically opposite way. In many European countries, and in North America, Japan and Australia, most children have all thinkable media technology in their homes. Not only do they have TV, but often two or more TV apparatuses at home, of which often one is in their own room. At the same time, there are frequently a video, personal computer and electronic computer and/or video games. More and more, children can also use CD-ROM and the Internet. In these countries, the parents – who traditionally have had the greatest influence on children's media use – therefore also have less and less insight into how much and what children watch. Media use is becoming more and more individualised and it is increasingly difficult for adults to serve as models for and accompany and discuss children's viewing.

In some countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America it is, on the other hand, common to watch together using the only generator driven TV or video in the village. One basic reason is that there is so little electricity in the rural areas, where most people live. Nor is it unusual that children have never watched TV at all (Jahangir 1995). The TV and video apparatuses are, however, forcing their way into all corners of the world, parallel to the explosion of satellite-TV channels and video films of the 1980s and 90s, with more and more advertising, fiction and media violence (see also *Robert Lamb's* article in this book).

As expected, children's TV programming is most unevenly distributed, as well. In some countries, hardly any children's programmes are produced. Even in the richer countries, however, the conditions of children's programming vary. In the U.S., the traditional TV networks seldom broadcast children's programmes which are tailored to different age groups and they seldom broadcast informative children's programmes (Chong 1995). The number of newly produced children's programmes in the U.S. has also clearly decreased since the deregulation of TV in the 1980s (Palmer 1995). In Europe, Japan and Australia, countries which normally have had a long tradition of production of children's programmes, these programmes on the national public service channels are threatened by competition from the many satellite-TV channels, which mostly contain fiction and animation.

A marked trend in the world is the introduction of special "niche" channels for children such as Nickelodeon, Disney, Fox and National Geographic. But these are American based pay-TV channels to which only some children have access.

Some glimpses of children's media situation in the world are presented in the second section of research articles in this book – *Children's Media Situation*. It must be stressed, however, that here, too, the articles are, primarily, about countries where research has been performed and where statistics on children's media access and media use are available. The articles by *Anura Goonasekera*, Singapore, *Sun Yunxiao*, the People's Republic of China, *Stephen Nugent*, Australia, *Nadia Bulbulia*, South Africa, and *Keith Roe*, Belgium, point out important variations in children's media, media access and media use in different regions.

The future goal of the Clearinghouse is to give a more diverse picture of children's media situation from a greater spectrum of countries – potential and interested authors are welcome to contact us. In this connection we have also contacted media research institutes in 40-50 nations to, if possible, obtain comparable statistics on children's media use. However, if continuous ratings or the like do exist in the country, they do not always include children. When child figures are included, methods as well as age groups vary in a way that make the data difficult to compare. We will continue to work with these figures and hope to return to them in a later publication. *The statistical section Media in the World* in this book gives an illustrative background, with facts on the distribution of TV, video, television programming for children and youth, cinema screens, computers, electronic games, radio and books, etc., in different countries, as well as a list of the largest international entertainment companies in the world.

A growing global awareness

Even if it is sometimes easy to feel resigned, especially on a national plane, to the drawbacks brought by the global media expansion, there are also positive features in the form of a counter-movement – the growing global awareness of children's media situation (see the Clearinghouse newsletters *News on Children and Violence on the Screen* No. 1-3 1997). An essential support for this movement is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One function of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is to follow up the various member nations' observance of the Convention. The Committee has in this connection entered the child and the media as a particularly important issue on the agenda. Within the Committee there is at present a working group on children and media, and the Committee has set down a range of recommendations on how implementation of articles 17 and 13 in the Convention can be realistically and practically regarded and facilitated (see the introductory section in the book, *Children and Media on the UN and UNESCO Agendas*).

The counter-movement is, for example, characterised by several recent international and regional meetings intended to support the vacillating state of children's TV programming, such as the film festival in Bratislava in 1994, the World Summit on Television and Children in Melbourne in 1995, the corresponding Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media in Manila, 1996, and the African Summit on Children's Broadcasting in Accra, 1997. Resolutions and declarations on children's programmes have been one result; these are circulated to the world's TV companies as a means of pressure and for endorsement. These documents are reproduced in the section *International Declarations and Resolutions* in the book. The Children's Television Charter resulting from the World Summit in Melbourne has, together with the Asian and African regional declarations, been discussed at the Second World Summit on Television for Children in London in March, 1998. A regional Summit on children's television for the Americas is planned for the year 2000, and a third World Summit is to be expected the year thereafter.

Furthermore, an international association for child and media researchers (IRFCAM, International Research Forum on Children and Media) was established in Melbourne, 1995, and the first large international forum ever for child and media researchers was held in 1997 in Paris, arranged by GRREM (Groupe de la recherche sur la relation enfants/médias).

The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen is also a part of this growing global awareness. The same applies for other UNESCO activities related to children and the media (see the introductory section in the book, *Children and Media on the UN and UNESCO Agendas*).

Moreover, a World Council for Media Education was created in the mid-1990s, which will meet for the second time in Sao Paolo in May 1998. Media education is regarded by many as a solution – through education children and young people can learn to reflexively handle the media (therein could lie a "solution" to the problem of media violence, too). Even if good media education partly can have this function, there is reason for pessimism, however, since media education in the schools is seldom fully realised. Despite the fact that media education in some form has long been included in the curricula in many countries, and despite the fact that the importance of media education has been stressed in many national, regional and international governmental reports and other contexts, very few children have in practice any media education at all. Apart from the efforts of lone fiery spirits' among some teaching-staff, the fine phrases about media education have mostly been on paper, especially when it comes to visual media.

Nor has media education – or information on children and the media – for parents and producers always found effective forms. Realising this kind of media education has also become more and more complicated due to the individualisation of media use in the homes and due to the deregulated, globalised media market where national politicians have less and less say, and the media, to a greater extent, turn to an expanding industry of private research institutes rather than to university researchers.

In the future, the Clearinghouse will also seek to stimulate exchange of knowledge about media education in the schools, and for parents and producers worldwide.

At the same time, there is need for other types of initiatives to improve children's relations to the media. Among other things, children should be actively included in the actual media production, something which also will mean a better platform for children's voices and opinions and a more just representation of children in the media. The section *Children's Participation in the Media* in this book presents a few, by no means exhaustive, examples of such initiatives which further children's rights – it is hoped that these examples can inspire similar activities. Among the examples are: UNICEFs media activities for children, the news agency Children's Express in the UK and USA, and children's and young people's participation in radio, television and video production, as well as on the Internet, in a range of countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America. The Clearinghouse is interested in collecting and publishing more comments and articles on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in the media world-wide, and hope that persons and organisations engaged in other projects related to children's media participation contact us about them.

In the growing global movement – in addition to these mentioned meetings, declarations, associations, fora and other activities – many voluntary international and national organisations exist which in various and other ways are engaged in issues related to children and media.

In the light of the fact that the discussion on children and media in several countries was heated during the 1970s, at least in those countries where the media are widely spread, but diminished during the deregulation in the 1980s, it is, in sum, gratifying to observe that the discussion has increased again and now also is carried on at the necessary global level. It is essential that the new discussion should partly focus on negative aspects – for example, to limit gratuitous media violence by encouraging the media to impose self-regulation. These regulations and measures could include that the media stipulate water-sheds before which times media violence shall not be transmitted; that the media classify media violence (by age limits and/or contents) and inform the viewers by means of, e.g., visible icons on the screen; perhaps that, as in the USA and Canada, V-chips are put into the TV-sets; that parents are offered different blocking devices for the Internet, etc. (see further under the headline *Regulations and Measures* in this book with contributions by *Titti Forsslund*, Sweden, and *Joanne Lisosky*, USA). It is of vital importance, however, that the discussion also focus on the positive possibilities of the media – for example, to increase manifoldness and quality in children's and adult programming, by means of, among other things, financial and other production support, and exchange of programmes between countries via special programme banks; to work for children's own participation in the media; and, not least, to realise *all* children's right to access to media.

Changing children's media situation also means that the circumstances in their personal environments and in society must be improved. Firstly, the risk of unwanted media influences is far less for children who are growing up in safe conditions and who have good relations to parents, school and peers. Secondly, it is necessary that children and young people are allowed to participate actively in shaping their society's future. Statements about how we adults need to hear children's voices and how we must listen to them will remain empty words unless children are given more opportunities to affect their own conditions. If children and young people become involved in activities that both are meaningful for themselves *and* are important for the decision making process in society – then they will also automatically be represented and heard in the media.

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Children and Television Violence in the United States

Ellen Wartella, Adriana Olivarez & Nancy Jennings

Americans live in a violent society. Alarming statistics reveal changes in U.S. society as the result of increased violence. According to a report issued by the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 1993), guns are involved in more than 75 percent of adolescent killings. Firearm-related violent crimes have been on the rise in the 1990's. Research indicates a 75.6 percent increase in firearm-related aggravated assault from 1985 to 1994 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1996). Americans have the highest murder rate of any nation in the world. But the numbers that tell the most tragic story concern children and adolescents:

- Among young people in the age group 15-24 years old, homicide is the second leading cause of death and for African American youth murder is number one.
- Adolescents account for 24 percent of all violent crimes leading to arrest. The rate has increased over time for those in the 12-19 year old age group, while it is down in the 35 and older age group. According to the Federal reports on crime in 1995, juvenile arrests for weapon violations have increased 113 percent nationwide between the years 1985 and 1994.
- Every 5 minutes a child is arrested in America for committing a violent crime and gun related violence take the life of an American child every three hours.
- A child growing up in Washington, DC, or Chicago is 15 times more likely to be murdered than a child in Northern Ireland.

What could account for this? Most of us generally accept the notion that violent behavior is a complex, multivariable problem, formed of many influences. Racism, poverty, drug abuse, child abuse, alcoholism, illiteracy, gangs, guns, mental illness, a decline in family cohesion, a lack of deterrents, the failure of positive role models... all interact to affect antisocial behavior. As Rowell Huesmann has argued, aggression is a syndrome, an enduring pattern of behavior that can persist through childhood into adulthood.

In simple terms, one given specific act of violence may be less mysterious than some think. We only suggest this rhetorically, for of course, we have few doubts that violence is nothing if not insidious and intractable in many ways. But consider the context not of one act of violence, but of the persistent fact of violence. Clearly a number of factors contribute to violence in American society, but to ignore television violence would be a grave oversight. Violence tears across the television screen through many types of programs from music videos and entertainment shows to reality programming and the evening news. By the time the average American child graduates from elementary school, he or she will have seen over 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other assorted acts of violence (Huston *et al.*, 1992). Even though viewing media violence may not be the *sole* contributor to violent behavior nor does it have the same effect on all who watch it, more than 40 years of research *does* indicate a relationship between exposure to media violence and aggressive behavior.

Moreover, the United States is a very heavy television using country: 98 percent of the 95 million American homes have television sets and nearly three quarters have more than one set; two-thirds have cable TV and four-fifths have VCRs. The television set is on more than seven hours per day in the average American home (*Broadcasting and Cable Yearbook*, 1996).

Most importantly, the television Americans watch – and increasingly the television programming transported around the world via American and other multinational television conglomerates such as Rupert Murdoch's Sky television – is very violent programming. Since 1994 we have been involved in the largest-ever study of portrayals of violence on American television, the National Television Violence Study, which came about as a consequence of American public and political concern about the relationship between television violence and real world violence.

In 1993, U.S. Senator Paul Simon became angered by network and cable television inaction after earlier federal legislation exempting the broadcast networks from antitrust regulation to allow them to agree on self-regulation of television violence. Simon strongly suggested that the networks and cablecasters appoint independent groups to monitor violence on television and cable for three years. Failure to do so, Simon said, would lead to Congressional hearings and legislation to reduce television violence. The networks appointed one monitor, and the cablecasters, through the National Cable Television Association, appointed another, the National Television Violence Study (or NTVS). Each was asked to monitor television programming for three years, and each hoped to avoid further regulation. However, the comprehensive 1996 U.S. National Telecommunications Act did bring further regulation, in the form of the V-chip, or blocking device for television sets, and a rating system for all television programming which allows viewers to screen out via the V-chip unwanted, presumably violent, content from appearing on their TV screens.

The National Television Violence Study

The NTVS reports on how violence is portrayed on cable and broadcast television in each of three years, 1996, 1997 and 1998, and it makes recommendations to policymakers, the industry and to parents. Our first report in February 1996 reported on television programming from the 1994-95 television season, and the latest report released in March 1997 reported on programming from the 1995-96 season.

The content analysis of television was of a constructed sample week (collected over more than two dozen weeks from October through June) of programming from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on 23 channels; these channels included the major broadcast networks, three independent stations, public broadcasting, 12 of the most popular basic cable networks and three premium cable channels – HBO, Cinemax and Showtime. In all, about 3,200 programs were sampled each year and about 2,700 were content analyzed for their depictions of violence.

We found very little change from year one to year two of our studies. The majority of American television shows have at least one act of violence in them; the context in which most violence is presented is sanitized; violence is rarely punished in the immediate context in which it occurs; and it rarely results in observable harm to the victims. For instance, in both years, we found that perpetrators of violence go unpunished in more than 70 percent of all violent scenes – although they may be punished by the end of the program. Moreover, the negative consequences of violence – harm to the victims, their families, as well as the psychological, if not actual physical harm to the perpetrators of violence – are not often portrayed. For example, nearly half of all violent interactions show no harm to the victims and more than half show no pain. And very infrequently, in less than one-fifth of all violent programming, are the long-term negative repercussions of violence, such as psychological, financial or emotional harm, ever portrayed. Weapons (such as handguns) appear in about one-quarter of all violent programs and very few programs (we estimate 4 percent in each year) have anti-violent themes. On the good side, with the exception of movies on television, television violence is not usually explicit or graphic. And there are differences across television channels (American public television being the least violent and premium cable channels being the most likely to have violent programs), and across programming genres (again movies on cable are most likely to show violence). Overall, however, the NTVS has demonstrated a striking amount of consistency in the presentation of violence on American television over the first two years of the study. American television is indeed a violent medium. (For a more detailed presentation of the National Television Violence Study, see next article.)

Research on the influences of television violence

Over the past forty plus years more than 3,500 research studies of the effects of television violence on viewers have been conducted in the United States, and during the 1990s there have been several extensive reviews of this literature, including the 1991 report of the Centers for Disease Control, which declared television violence a public health hazard; the 1993 study of violence in American life from the National

Academy of Science, which implicated media along with other social and psychological contributors to violence; and the American Psychological Association's 1992 study, which also implicated media violence. All three of these reviews supported the conclusion that mass media contribute to aggressive behavior and attitudes as well as lead to desensitization and fear effects. No study claims that viewing media violence is the *only*, nor even the most important, contributor to violent behavior. Furthermore, it is not every act of violence in the media that raises concern, nor every child or adult who is affected. Yet, there is clear evidence that exposure to media violence contributes in significant ways to real world violence. Each of the three major effects of watching media violence, with specific concerns for child viewers, will be considered: the social learning effect, the desensitization effect and the fear effect.

Social learning

The 1993 report of the American Psychological Association concluded that: "there is absolutely no doubt that those who are heavy viewers of this violence demonstrate increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior" (American Psychological Association, 1993). This conclusion is based on the examination of hundreds of experimental and longitudinal studies which support this position. Moreover, field studies and cross-national studies indicate that the viewing of television aggression increases subsequent aggression and that such behavior can become part of a lasting behavioral pattern.

Three basic theoretical models have been proposed to describe the process by which such learning and imitation of television violence occurs: social learning theory, priming effects theory and a social developmental model of learning.

Social learning theory, first proposed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, is perhaps the best known theoretical account of violence effects. Bandura asserts that through observing television models, viewers come to learn behaviors which are appropriate; that is, which behaviors will be rewarded and which will be punished. In this way, viewers seek to attain rewards and therefore want to imitate these media models. When both children and adults are shown an aggressive model who is either rewarded or punished for their aggressive behavior, models who are positively reinforced influence imitation among the viewers. Even research in the field has demonstrated that aggression is learned at a young age and becomes more impervious to change as the child grows older. In a longitudinal study to examine the long-term effects of television violence on aggression and criminal behavior, Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz and Walder (1984) studied a group of youth across 22 years, at ages 8, 18 and 30. For boys (and to a lesser, though still significant extent for girls), early television violence viewing correlated with self-reported aggression at age 30 and added significantly to the prediction of serious criminal arrests accumulated by age 30. These researchers find a longitudinal relationship between habitual childhood exposure to television violence and adult crime and suggest that approximately 10 percent of the variability in later criminal behavior can be attributed to television violence.

Priming effects theory serves to augment the more traditional social learning theory account of television violence effects. In the work of Leonard Berkowitz and his colleagues, this theoretical account asserts that many media effects are immediate, transitory and short (Berkowitz, 1984). Berkowitz suggests that when people watch television violence, it activates or "primes" other semantically related thoughts which may influence how the person responds to the violence on TV: viewers who identify with the actors on television may imagine themselves like that character carrying out the aggressive actions of the character on television, and research evidence suggests that exposure to media aggression does indeed "prime" other aggressive thoughts, evaluations and even behaviors such that violence viewers report a greater willingness to use violence in interpersonal situations.

Only Rowell Huesmann's (1986) theoretical formulation of the social developmental model of violence effects offers a true reciprocal theoretical account of how viewers' interest in media violence, attention to such violence and individual viewer characteristics may interact in a theory of media violence effects. Using ideas from social cognition theory he develops an elaborate cognitive mapping or script model. He argues that social behavior is controlled by "programs" for behavior which are established during childhood. These "programs" or "scripts" are stored in memory and are used as guides to social behavior and problem solving. Huesmann and Miller (1994) submit that "a script suggests what events are to happen in the environment, how the person should behave in response to these events, and what the likely outcome to those behaviors would be". Violence from television is "encoded" in the cognitive map of viewers, and subsequent viewing of television violence helps to maintain these aggressive thoughts, ideas and behaviors. Over time such continuing attention to television violence thus can influence people's attitudes toward violence and their maintenance and elaboration of aggressive scripts.

This theory suggests that while viewing violence may not cause aggressive behavior, it certainly has an impact on the formation of cognitive scripts for mapping how to behave in response to a violent event and what the outcome is most likely to be. Television portrayals, then, are among the media and personal sources that provide the text for the script which is maintained and expanded upon by continued exposure to scripts of violence.

Huesmann has demonstrated that there are key factors which are particularly important in maintaining the television viewing-aggression relationship for children: the child's intellectual achievement level, social popularity, identification with television characters, belief in the realism of the TV violence and the amount of fantasizing about aggression. According to Huesmann, a heavy diet of television violence sets into motion a sequence of processes, based on these personal and interpersonal factors, that results in many viewers becoming not only more aggressive but also developing increased interest in seeing more television violence.

Variations by portrayals and viewers

Clearly, not all violent depictions should be treated equally, nor all viewers. The National Television Violence Study has identified several contextual factors within a representation that may influence audience reactions to media violence including: 1) the nature of the perpetrator, 2) the nature of the target, 3) the reason for the violence, 4) the presence of weapons, 5) the extent and graphicness of the violence, 6) the degree of realism of the violence, 7) whether the violence is rewarded or punished, 8) the consequences of violence, and 9) whether humor is involved in violence (Wilson *et al.*, 1996).

In addition, research indicates that certain factors may be processed differently by young viewers. First, young children have more difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy and often imitate superheros with magical powers such as the *Power Rangers* (Boyatzis, 1995). Secondly, young children may have difficulty connecting scenes and drawing inferences from the plot. Timing of punishments and rewards becomes important in this instance. In many programs, the crime or violent behavior may go unpunished until the end of the program. Young children may have difficulty connecting the ending punishment with the initial violent act and may, therefore, believe that the violence went unpunished (Wilson *et al.*, 1996). Thus, learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors from television varies by both the nature of the portrayals and the nature of the viewers. The presence of contextual factors in the portrayals which may inhibit young children's social learning of aggression decreases the negative consequences of such portrayals and should be encouraged. Not all violent portrayals are the same and the context of violence is clearly quite important. Similarly, young children, those under the age of seven or eight, may be particularly susceptible to learning from exposure to television violence because of differences in how they make sense of television compared to adults.

Desensitization and fear

Two other effects of television violence viewing have been identified in the research literature: the desensitization and the fear effect. These effects may influence even those viewers who do not themselves behave violently or who have positive attitudes towards using violence.

Research has demonstrated that prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward real world violence and the victims of violence which in turn can lead to callous attitudes toward violence directed at others and a decreased likelihood to take action on behalf of the victim when violence occurs (e.g., Donnerstein, Slaby and Eron, 1994; for further references and discussion, see Wilson *et al.*, 1996). Over time, even those viewers who initially react with horror at media violence may become habituated to it or more psychologically comfortable such that they view any given act of violence as less severe and they may evaluate media violence more favorably. Desensitization can effect all viewers over time.

A third likely effect of viewing television violence has been studied extensively by George Gerbner and his colleagues (Gerbner, Gross, Signiorelli and Morgan, 1986) which demonstrates that heavy viewers of television violence become fearful of the world, afraid of becoming a victim of violence and over time engage in more self-protective behaviors and show more mistrust of others. To the extent that viewers equate the fictional world of television with its overrepresentation of violence as the same as the real world they live in, then such heavy viewers tend to see their world as a fearful and crime-ridden place. It is likely that both fictional and reality programs (including crime-saturated television news) contribute to this fear-inducing effect among viewers.

Television violence in a global context

The substantial research in the United States over the past more than 40 years has been reviewed and found persuasive among the American public and politicians. It was reviews and conclusions such as those presented here which encouraged Senator Simon's and the U.S. Congress's considerable policy initiatives against television violence in the last four years. Children as an audience for such violence have been of considerable concern, and indeed, the V-chip blocking device is thought to be a reasonable remedy for parents to use to protect their children from violent television programming.

Whether the magnitude of the effects of television violence in comparison with other causes of American violence and our violent society is small or large is not at all clear. Many European critics of the American violence literature have pointed out that neither television outside of the U.S. is as violent as our television, nor are the other underlying factors such as poverty and the easy access to guns as prevalent, and therefore this literature is not applicable to other countries and other cultures. To the extent that the global nature of television and film and the dominance of American popular culture is moving across the privatized television environments of Europe and elsewhere, then perhaps American television programming and its effects will foreshadow concerns about television violence effects in other countries. It is clear that where children and television violence is concerned, the question that remains is not whether media violence has an effect, but rather how important that effect is in comparison with other factors in bringing about the current level of crime in the U.S. and other industrialized nations. Future research should also aim to establish who precisely is most susceptible to media violence, and, most importantly, what sorts of intervention might help diminish its influence. In the meantime, any interventions that help establish policies and practices to reduce the socially inappropriate ways of portraying violence and increase the socially responsible ways (such as using violence to assert anti-violence messages) should be encouraged as well. Children and television violence is a public issue that is not going away and which should engage all who are concerned with children's welfare.

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The Nature and Context of Violence on American Television

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The goal of this article is to review briefly the largest and most comprehensive assessment of violence on American television in the history of social science research. Funded by the National Cable Television Association in 1994, the $3.5 million dollar National Television Violence Study (NTVS) is a three-year effort to examine the amount and way in which violence is presented across 23 broadcast and cable channels in the United States. To date, the first (1994/95) and second (1995/96) years of research for the NTVS have already been completed.

The study involves a consortium of scholars from four research institutions. Researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, conduct a content analysis of the nature and amount of violence in entertainment programming. The University of Texas at Austin provides a similar analysis of violence in one type of television programming – reality shows such as tabloid news, talk shows, documentaries, and police programs. The University of Wisconsin, Madison, analyze the role of violence ratings and advisories used on television, including their effect on the viewing decisions of parents and children. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, conducts studies on the effectiveness of anti-violence public service announcements and educational initiatives produced by the television industry.

Only a portion of the 1995/96 content analysis of entertainment programming conducted by the researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is reviewed in this article[1]. A comprehensive version of the year 1 or year 2 UCSB report, as well as the reports from the other research sites, can be found in the NTVS scientific papers (National Television Violence Study, 1997, 1998). This article is divided into four major sections. In the first section, the foundations of the content analysis are reviewed. In the second section, the methods employed in the study are delineated.

The third section features the results from the second year of the UCSB study. And finally, the last section contains several recommendations regarding the portrayal of violence for the television industry, policy makers, and parents.

Foundations of research

In first approaching this research project, we conducted an exhaustive review of the collective body of scientific knowledge assessing the effects of televised violence on the audience. After reviewing all of the existing evidence, we reached the four following conclusions, which represent the key assumptions underlying our research:

Foundation 1:
Television violence contributes to antisocial effects on viewers

Our conclusion that violence on television contributes to negative effects on viewers is hardly novel. That same conclusion has already been reached by virtually every major group or agency that has investigated the topic. The American Psychological Association (1993), the American Medical Association (1996), the Centers for Disease Control (1991), the National Academy of Science (1993), the National Institute of Mental Health (1982), and the U.S. Surgeon General (1972), among others, have all agreed that viewing TV violence can have a number of adverse effects on children and even on adults.

Foundation 2:
There are three primary types of effects from viewing televised violence:

- Learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors
- Desensitization to violence
- Increased fear of being victimized by violence.

Research clearly shows that television violence contributes to aggressive behavior in children, and that this effect can last into adulthood. One study, for example, found that exposure to television violence at age 8 helped to predict criminal behavior in a sample of adults (Huesmann, 1986; Huesmann & Eron, 1986). Recent opinion polls suggest that most adults now recognize that televised violence can teach aggressive attitudes and behaviors to young viewers (Lacayo, 1995).

There are, however, other types of effects that have received less attention. Research demonstrates that repeated exposure to TV violence can cause viewers to become more callous, or desensitized, to the harmfulness of violent behavior (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988). In addition, long-term exposure to violent portrayals can increase people's fears about real-world violence (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). That is, people who watch a lot of televised violence show exaggerated fear of being attacked by a violent assailant. Although these three types of effects are very different in nature, they all deserve attention from parents, policy-makers, and the television industry.

Foundation 3:
Not all violence poses the same degree of risk of these harmful effects

It is well established by social science research that exposure to televised violence contributes to a range of anti-social effects on many viewers. But the effects from viewing violence are not uniform across all possible examples of violent depictions.

Obviously, there is a vast array of approaches to presenting violent material. In terms of its visual presentation, the violence may occur on screen and be shown graphically, or it may occur off screen but be clearly implied. Violent acts may be shown close up or at a distance. There are also differences in the scripting of the characters who commit violent acts and their reasons for doing so. Differences also exist in the depiction of the results of violence, including both the pain and suffering of victims as well as the outcomes for the perpetrator. Simply put, not all portrayals of violence are the same; they vary in important ways.

Studies show that the way in which violence is presented helps to determine whether a portrayal might be harmful to viewers. Some features of violence increase the risk of a harmful effect, whereas others decrease that risk. In order to evaluate violence on television, then, we must look at the *contextual features* of different portrayals. Based on an extensive review of all the studies in this area (see Wilson et al., 1997, for complete review), we identified nine specific contextual features that influence how audiences will respond to television violence (see Table 1). Each one of these contextual elements is reviewed below.

Table 1. Predicted Impact of Contextual Factors on Three Outcomes of Exposure to Media Violence

	Outcomes of media violence		
Contextual factors	Learning aggression	Fear	Desensitization
Attractive perpetrator	△		
Attractive target		△	
Justified violence	△		
Unjustified violence	▼	△	
Presence of weapons	△		
Extensive/graphic violence	△	△	△
Realistic violence	△	△	
Rewards	△	△	
Punishments	▼	▼	
Pain/harm cues	▼		
Humor	△		△

△ = likely to *increase* the outcome

▼ = likely to *decrease* the outcome

Note: Predicted effects are based on review of social science research on contextual features of violence. Blank spaces indicate that there is inadequate research to make a prediction.

Source: "Violence in Television Programming Overall: University of California, Santa Barbara Study" by Wilson et al. (1998), *National Television Violence Study 2,* p. 14. Copyright 1998 by Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission of the authors.

Nature of the perpetrator:

The first contextual feature is the *nature of the perpetrator*. Different types of characters use violence on television. Studies show that viewers of all ages are more likely to emulate and learn from characters who are perceived as attractive (see Bandura, 1986, 1994). Thus, a perpetrator of violence who is attractive or engaging is likely to be a more potent role model for viewers than is a neutral or unattractive character. Certain characteristics of perpetrators increase their attractiveness. Studies suggest that viewers assign more positive ratings to those characters who act prosocially (e.g., benevolently, heroic) than to those who are cruel (Hoffner & Cantor, 1985; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Moreover, research reveals that children as young as 4 years of age can distinguish between prototypically good and bad characters in a television program (Berndt & Berndt, 1975; Liss, Reinhardt, & Fredriksen, 1983).

Nature of the victim:

The second contextual feature is the *nature of the victim*. Just as the perpetrator is an important contextual feature of violence, so is the target. The nature of the victim is most likely to influence audience fear rather than learning, however. Studies show that viewers feel concern for characters who are perceived as attractive and often share such characters' emotional experiences (Zillmann, 1980, 1991). This type of empathetic responding has been found with characters who are benevolent or heroic (Comisky & Bryant, 1982; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977), as well as characters who are perceived similar to the viewer (Feshbach & Roe, 1968; Tannenbaum & Gaer, 1965). Thus, a well-liked character can encourage audience involvement. When such a character is threatened or attacked in a violent scene, viewers are likely to experience increased anxiety and fear.

Reason for violence:

The third contextual feature is the character's *reason* or motive for the violence. Viewers interpret an act of violence differently depending on a character's motives for engaging in such behavior. Certain motives like self-defense or protecting a loved one can make physical aggression seem justified. Studies show that justified violence increases the chance that viewers will learn aggression because such portrayals legitimize or sanction such behavior (Berkowitz & Geen, 1967; Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963; Geen & Stonner, 1973). In contrast, violence that is undeserved or purely malicious decreases the risk of imitation or learning of aggression (Berkowitz & Powers, 1979; Geen, 1981).

Weapon used:

The fourth context variable is the *use of weapons*. Characters can use their own physical strength to enact violence against a victim or they can use some type of weapon. Conventional weapons like guns and knives can increase viewer aggression because such devices often trigger the memory of past violent events and behaviors (Berkowitz, 1984, 1990). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of 56 published experiments found that the presence of weapons, either pictorially or in the natural environment, significantly enhanced aggression among angered and nonangered subjects (Carlson, Marcus-Newhall, & Miller, 1990). This type of priming effect is less likely to occur with novel or unconventional weapons such as a chair or a lead pipe.

Extensiveness/graphicness:
The fifth contextual feature is the *extensiveness/graphicness* of the violence. Television programs and especially movies vary widely in the extent and graphicness of the violence they contain. A violent incident between a perpetrator and a victim can last only a few seconds and be shot from a distance or it can persist for several minutes and involve many close-up views of the action. Research indicates that extensive or repeated violence can increase desensitization, learning, and fear in viewers (Huesmann, 1986; Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988; Ogles & Hoffner, 1987).

Realism:
The *realism* of the violence is the sixth contextual feature. Portrayals of violence that seem realistic are more likely to encourage aggression in viewers than are unrealistic scenes (Atkin, 1983; Geen, 1975; Thomas & Tell, 1974). Realistic depictions of brutality also can increase viewers' fear (Geen, 1975; Geen & Rakosky, 1975). However, this does not mean that cartoon or fantasy violence on television is harmless. Research shows that children under the age of 7 have difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy on television (Morison & Gardner, 1978). In other words, what seems unrealistic to a mature viewer may appear to be quite real to a younger child. This helps to explain why younger children will readily imitate violent cartoon characters.

Rewards and punishments:
The next contextual feature is *rewards and punishments*. Violence that is glamorized or rewarded poses a risk for viewers, but so does violence that simply goes unpunished. Studies show that rewarded violence or violence that is not overtly punished encourages the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Bandura, 1965; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961, 1963; Paik & Comstock, 1994). In contrast, portrayals of punished violence can decrease the chances that viewers will learn aggression. Rewards and punishments can influence audience fear as well. Viewers who watch violence go unpunished are more anxious and more pessimistic about the consequences of real-life violence (Bryant, Carveth, & Brown, 1981).

Consequences of violence:
Another important contextual feature involves the *consequences of violence*. Numerous studies indicate that showing the serious harm and pain that occurs from violence can discourage viewers from imitating or learning aggression (Baron, 1971a, 1971b; Goransen, 1969; Sanders & Baron, 1975; Wotring & Greenberg, 1973). The assumption here is that cries of pain evoke sympathy and remind the viewer of social norms against aggression.

Humor:

The last contextual feature is ***humor***. Viewers interpret violence that is cast in a humorous light as less devastating and less harmful (Gunter, 1985). Humor also may seem like a reward for violence. For these reasons, the presence of humor in a violent scene can increase the chances that viewers will imitate or learn aggression from such a portrayal. Indeed, studies have revealed that exposure to violence in a humorous setting increases aggressive behavior (Baron, 1978; Berkowitz, 1970). Humor can also desensitize viewers to the seriousness of violence (Jablonski & Zillmann, 1995).

Foundation 4:
Not all viewers are affected by violence in the same way

In their viewing of television violence, both children and adults are influenced by the contextual features described above. To illustrate, rewarded violence *increases* the likelihood of learning aggression regardless of the age of the viewer, whereas punished violence *decreases* that risk. Nevertheless, some unique concerns arise when we think about young children, particularly those under the age of 7.

Because young children's cognitive abilities are still developing, they often interpret television messages differently from mature viewers (see Wilson et al., 1997, for complete review). For instance, the ability to understand the difference between reality and fantasy emerges gradually over the course of a child's development (Morison & Gardner, 1978; Taylor & Howell, 1973). As a result, younger children are more likely to perceive fantasy and cartoon violence as realistic, making this type of content more problematic for young ages.

In addition, younger children are less capable of linking scenes together to make sense of events that occur at different points in a program (see Collins, 1983). Therefore, if punishment for violence is delayed until the end of the program, this deterrent may go unnoticed by a young child. Punishment or any other contextual feature must occur in the same scene in order for a younger viewer to connect it to the original violent behavior.

These differences in cognitive ability mean that not all viewers will be affected in the same way by a violent portrayal. Children below the age of 7 may be especially vulnerable because they cannot easily discount fantasy violence as unreal and have trouble connecting events in the plot unless they are in the same scene. It is important to consider the age of the viewer when thinking about the harmful effects of television violence.

To summarize, several important ideas provide the foundations for this research. Based on an extensive body of evidence, we know that exposure to television can contribute to: (1) learning aggressive thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, (2) becoming desensitized to the seriousness of violence, and (3) feeling frightened of becoming a victim of real-life violence. Research was also reviewed documenting that not all violence on television poses the same risk. Some contextual features can *increase* the risk of harmful effects whereas other features can actually *decrease* the likelihood of such outcomes. Finally, the risks associated with television violence depend not only on the nature of the portrayal but also on the nature of the audience. Younger children are more vulnerable to certain types of depictions because of their limited abilities to make sense of television.

Methods

Given the four foundations reviewed above, the goal of the UCSB study was to measure violence across the entire landscape of U.S. television. In the second year of the study, we examined the nature and the amount of violent depictions during the 1995/96 viewing season. Our emphasis is on the contextual features of violence that either increase or decrease the risk of learning aggression, fear, or desensitization. In the section that follows, the methods employed in the study are delineated. More precisely, the sample, definition of violence, the units of analysis, contextual variables, and training and reliability of coders are explicated in the section below.

Sample

A total of 3,235 programs were randomly sampled from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. across 23 channels from October 1995 to June of 1996 to build a composite week of television programming for each source. The 23 channels were comprised of the broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox), broadcast independents (KCAL, KCOP, KTTV), public broadcasting network (PBS), basic cable (A&E, AMC, Cartoon Network, Disney, Family Channel, Lifetime, Nickelodeon, TNT, USA, VH-1, and MTV), and premium cable (Cinemax, HBO, Showtime). All programs in the sample were aired and taped in the Los Angeles market. A total of 15% (N = 478) of the programs were religious programs, game shows, infomercials, instructional shows, or breaking news. Per the NTVS contract with the National Cable Television Association, these five types of programs were sampled and included in the representative week of television programming but were ***not*** coded or assessed for violence. Thus, a total of 2,757 programs were assessed for violence in this study.

Definition of violence

The fundamental definition of violence places emphasis on a number of elements including intention to harm, the physical nature of harm, and the involvement of animate beings. More precisely, violence is defined as "any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occurs as a result of unseen violent means". Based upon this definition, there are three primary types of violence: credible threats, behavioral acts, and harmful consequences.

Units of analysis & contextual features

Violence is measured at three distinct levels or units of analysis. First, we identify each *violent incident*, or interaction between a perpetrator and a victim. Second, we analyzed each *violent scene*, or instance of ongoing, uninterrupted violence. A violent scene, such as a bar fight, often contains several violent incidents between different types of characters. Finally, we analyzed the violence at the end of the entire violent *program*. Examining violence at the program level allows us to differentiate the way aggression is portrayed in a historical film such as *Schindler's List* from an action adventure movie such as *Terminator 2*, which both contain roughly equal amounts of violence but the message or use of violence in these two cinematic pieces is drastically different. By measuring the context of violence at all three of these levels we provide rich and thorough information about the meaning or context of violence in television programming.

Contextual features were assessed at the level most sensitive to capturing the nature or way in which violence is portrayed on television. At the incident level, we assessed variables such as the nature of the perpetrator and target, the reason for the violence, the means or weapons used, and the immediate consequences of violence (i.e., harm/pain). At the scene level, the presence of humor, rewards/punishments, and the extensiveness/graphicness of violence was measured. And at the end of each violent program, the presence of an anti-violence theme, the duration of harm/pain portrayed, the punishments delivered to all good/bad characters, and the realism of the violence was measured.

Coding and reliability

Many precautions were taken to ensure that a consistent standard of judgment was used to evaluate the television programming in the sample. An elaborate codebook was developed to provide detailed and precise definitions of terms and rules of judgment for coders to follow. We trained more than 50 undergraduate research assistants to become thoroughly adept at applying the rules laid out in the codebook. The research assistants received 60 hours of classroom training and 40 hours of laboratory practice in making coding judgments prior to beginning coding programs for this study.

Coders worked individually in quiet labs as they assessed programs for violence. Every two weeks, each coder was tested to make sure the same rules and definitions were used across individuals. Agreement or reliability among the coders was consistently high throughout the coding process, underscoring the scientific rigor of the study.

Results

As noted above, the goal of the second year study was to assess the amount and context of violence on U.S. television during the 1995/96 season. In addition to studying television overall, we also looked at variability in the portrayal of violence across different types of channels (broadcast networks, independent broadcast, public broadcast, basic cable, and premium cable), and in different genres of programming (children's, comedy, drama, movies, music videos, reality-based). We also assessed whether tne profile of violence on television has changed from the first year of the study (1994/95) to the second year (1995/96). In the section that follows, the major findings from the study are reviewed.

- *There has been no meaningful change in violence on television since 1994/95.*

Neither the overall prevalence of violence nor the way in which violence is presented has changed appreciably during the last year. In the first year of this study (1994/95), 58% of programs contained violence. In the second year (1995/96), 61% of programs contain violence (see Figure 1). This small difference does not represent a significant shift, according to the standards of change used in this study. Thus, the prevalence of violence on television has not increased or decreased meaningfully from Year 1 to Year 2. It is important to note that these statistics do not reveal the nature or extent of violence in television programs; rather, they indicate only that some violence occurs within these shows.

A separate analysis of the different channel types shows remarkable stability as well, with one exception. The percentage of programs with violence on the broadcast networks has increased slightly from 47% to 54%. This small increase holds up even when we examine only prime-time programming on the broadcast networks. Though showing no significant change from Year 1 (85%) to Year 2 (86%), premium cable channels continue to have the highest proportion of programs with violence.

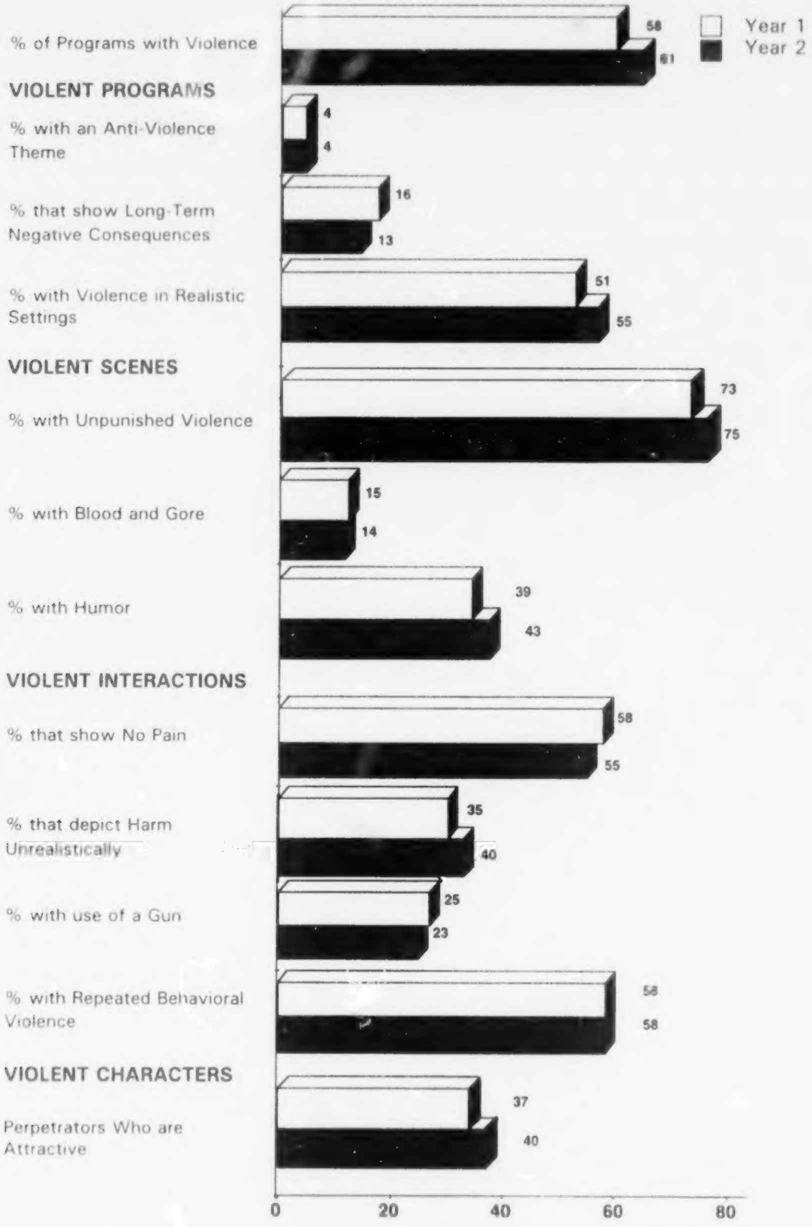
We also found that the way in which violence is presented has not changed from 1994/95 to 1995/96. For example, violence still typically involves extensive violent action, often includes a gun, is trivialized by humor, but seldom is graphic or gory (see Figure 1). These patterns characterize the entire television landscape, and for the most part, also hold true across different types of channels and genres of programming. This extraordinary degree of consistency shows that there are very stable formulas or patterns for depicting violence on television.

- *Violence on television is still frequently glamorized.*

Good characters frequently are the perpetrators of aggression on TV. A full 40% of the violent incidents are initiated by characters who have good qualities that make them attractive role models to viewers. Not only are attractive characters often violent, but physical aggression is frequently condoned. More than one third (37%) of violent programs feature "bad" characters who are never or rarely punished anywhere in the plot; another 28% contain bad characters who are punished only at the end of the story. Good characters hardly ever experience repercussions (i.e., regret, criticism) for violence on television. Finally, 75% of violent scenes contain no form of punishment for the aggression. That is, perpetrators rarely show remorse at the time they engage in aggression, and are seldom condemned by others or immediately apprehended. This is of particular concern for younger children, who often lack the capability to link punishments shown later in a program to earlier violent acts.

This glamorization of violence poses risks for the audience. Studies show that children will imitate violent characters who are heroic or attractive (Liss et al., 1983). In addition, viewers are more likely to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from violence that is rewarded or implicitly condoned than from violence that is clearly punished (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963).

Figure 1. Overall Industry Averages: Year 1 vs. Year 2 Comparisons



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- *Most violence on television remains sanitized.*

Violence is typically shown with little or no harm to the victim. In fact, more than half of the violent incidents (55%) on television depict no physical injury or pain to the victim. Looking across the entire program, only 13% of violent shows portray the long-term negative consequences of violence such as physical and psychological suffering.

Research indicates that showing the realistic consequences of violence, such as pain cues and suffering, can decrease the chances that viewers will learn aggression from television violence (Baron 1971a, 1971b; Wotring & Greenberg, 1973). Therefore, sterilized portrayals of violence pose risk for the audience.

- *There are still very few programs that feature an anti-violence theme.*

Rather than showing violence merely to excite or entertain, a program can feature violence in a way that discourages it. The overall message in such a program is actually an anti-violence one. This study identified four ways in which a program can emphasize an anti-violence theme: (1) alternatives to physical aggression are presented and discussed; (2) pain and suffering from violence are depicted throughout the plot, especially with regard to the victims' families, friends, and community; (3) the main characters repeatedly show reluctance or remorse for committing acts of violence; and (4) on balance, violence is punished far more than it is rewarded.

Only 4% of the violent programs on television convey an overall anti-violence theme. In other words, violence is seldom used in an educational way to emphasize the personal and social costs of such antisocial behavior.

- *Portrayals that have a high risk of teaching aggression to children under 7 are concentrated in the very programs and channels targeted to young viewers.*

Certain depictions can be labeled "high risk" because several plot elements that encourage aggression are all featured in one scene. These high-risk portrayals involve: (1) a perpetrator who is attractive; (2) violence that seems justified; (3) violence that goes unpunished (no remorse, criticism, or penalty); (4) minimal consequences to the victims; and (5) violence that seems realistic to the viewer. It should be noted that what is perceived as "realistic", and therefore what qualifies as "high risk", differs according to the age of the viewer.

In a typical week of television, there are over 800 violent portrayals that qualify as high risk for children under 7. Where are these hazardous portrayals located on television? Of all genres, children's programs contain the greatest number of these high-risk violent portrayals (N = 409). In other words, most of the portrayals that pose particular concern for teaching aggressive attitudes and behaviors to young children are contained in the very programs that are targeted to young viewers. Furthermore, nearly all of the children's programs that contain these kinds of portrayals are cartoons.

Of all channel types, child-oriented basic cable (Cartoon Network, Disney, and Nickelodeon) contains the most high-risk portrayals for young viewers. The individual channels and time periods that primarily feature cartoons are most responsible for this finding. However, it should be noted that not all cartoons contain high-risk portrayals. Adults often assume that violent cartoons are not a problem for children because the content is so unrealistic. However, this assumption is directly contradicted by research on the effects of viewing violence by younger children. Numerous studies show that animated programs have the potential of increasing aggressive behavior in young children (Hapkiewicz, 1979). Thus, violent cartoons should not be regarded as harmless, particularly for children under 7 years of age who have difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy.

- *For older children and teens, high-risk portrayals that encourage aggression are found mostly in movies and dramas.*

A similar formula poses a high risk of teaching and reinforcing aggression among older viewers: *an attractive perpetrator who engages in justified violence that goes unpunished, that shows minimal consequences, and that seems realistic.* Unlike younger children, older children and adolescents are capable of discounting portrayals of violence that are highly fantastic, such as cartoons. Thus, older viewers are susceptible primarily to more realistic portrayals of violence.

In a typical week, there are nearly 400 portrayals of violence that qualify as high risk for older children and adolescents. Movies and drama programs are the two genres most likely to contain high-risk portrayals for older children and teens.

Recommendations

The recommendations offered here follow from the findings of the 1995/96 content analysis of violence on American television. These recommendations were designed to address three specific audiences in the United States: the television industry, public policy-makers, and parents. However, each of these recommendations can also be applied to international audiences concerned about the harm that exposure to certain types of violent television portrayals may have on viewers.

For the television industry

- *Produce more programs that avoid violence; if a program does contain violence, keep the number of violent incidents low.*

We do not advocate that all violence be eliminated from television, nor do we profess to know exactly how much is "too much." But we do know that the overall amount of violence on American television has not changed appreciably from 1994/95 to 1995/96. It is still the case that more than half (61%) the programs in a composite week of TV contain some violence. Furthermore, most programs with violence feature numerous violent incidents rather than a single scene. Our recommendation is to begin efforts to cut back.

- *Be creative in showing:*
  - violent acts being punished,
  - more negative consequences, both short-term and long-term, for violence,
  - more alternatives to the use of violence in solving problems,
  - less justification for violent actions.

This recommendation recognizes that not all violence is the same, that some portrayals pose more risk to the audience than others. Conveying the message that violence gets punished, that it is not always justified, that there are alternatives to aggression, and that violence causes serious consequences (i.e., pain and suffering) for the victims are all ways to reduce the risk of a negative influence on viewers. We encourage producers to move beyond the "old formula" where violence is presented as a defensible course of action to solve problems, where characters continually get away with such behavior, and where the suffering of victims is seldom shown. Fewer glamorized and sanitized portrayals would significantly reduce the risk for viewers, even if the overall number of violent portrayals were held constant.

- *When violence is presented, consider greater emphasis on a strong anti-violence theme.*

The use of an anti-violence theme on television continues to be rare. In both Year 1 and Year 2, only 4% of all programs in a typical week employed violence to emphasize an anti-violence message. This is an area where a substantial effort or initiative could make its impact felt clearly and immediately. We encourage the television industry to create more programs that: (1) present alternatives to violent actions throughout the program; (2) show main characters repeatedly discussing the negative consequences of violence; (3) emphasize the physical pain and emotional suffering that results from violence; and (4) show that punishments for violence clearly and consistently outweigh rewards.

For policy makers

- *Recognize that context is an essential aspect of television violence and rely on scientific evidence to identify the context features that pose the most risk.*

Treating all acts of violence as if they were the same disregards a rich body of scientific knowledge about media effects. An appreciation of key contextual factors is crucial for understanding the impact of televised violence on the audience. Our high-risk composite analysis demonstrates that portrayals that are not necessarily explicit but that present violence as attractive, rewarding, and painless pose a significant threat of increasing children's aggressive behavior. At the base of any policy initiative in this realm is the need to define violence and, assuming that not all violence is to be treated equally, to differentiate types of violent depictions that pose the greatest cause for concern.

- *Continue to monitor the nature and extent of violence on television.*

Evidence of the harmful effects associated with televised violence is well established. The stakes are high in terms of social implications in this realm not so much because of the effects of viewing any one violent program but more because of the fact that most everyone watches TV, most people watch a lot, and most of television contains violence.

For parents

Perhaps the most important recommendations regarding the harmful effects of viewing violence can be offered to parents. It may take years to alter significantly the profile of violence on television. In contrast, parents can begin immediately to change the way they think about violence on television and the way they make decisions about their children's viewing.

- *Be aware of the three risks associated with viewing television violence.*

Evidence of the potential harmful effects associated with viewing violence on television is well established. The most troubling of these involves children's learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Arguably more pervasive and often underemphasized are the other two risks associated with television violence: fear and desensitization. An appreciation of these three effects will help parents to recognize the role of television in children's socialization.

- *Consider the context of violent depictions in making viewing decisions for children.*

As demonstrated throughout this article, not all violent portrayals are the same in terms of their impact on the audience. Some depictions pose greater risks for children than others, and some may even be prosocial. When considering a particular program, think about whether violence is rewarded, whether heroes or good characters engage in violence, whether violence appears to be morally condoned, whether the serious negative consequences of violence are avoided, and whether humor is used. These are the types of portrayals that are most harmful.

- *Consider a child's developmental level when making viewing decisions.*

Throughout this article, we have underscored the importance of the child's developmental level or cognitive ability in making sense of television. Very young children are less able to distinguish fantasy from reality on television. Thus, for preschoolers and younger elementary school children, cartoon violence and fantasy violence cannot be dismissed or exonerated because it is unrealistic. Indeed, younger children identify strongly with superheroes and fantastic cartoon characters, and often learn from and imitate such portrayals. Furthermore, younger children have difficulty connecting non-adjacent scenes together and drawing causal inferences about the plot. Therefore, punishments, pain cues, or serious consequences of violence that are presented later in a plot, well after the violent act, may not be comprehended fully by a young child. For younger viewers, then, it is particularly important that contextual features like punishment and pain be shown within the violent scene, rather than solely at the end of the program.

- *Recognize that certain types of violent cartoons pose particularly high risk for young children's learning of aggression.*

Our findings suggest that certain animated programs can be particularly problematic for younger viewers. We have identified a type of portrayal that we label "high risk" because it contains an array of elements that encourage the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. In particular, a high-risk portrayal for learning is one that features *an attractive character who engages in violence that is condoned and that does not result in any serious consequences to the victim.* Parents of younger children should closely monitor cartoon programming with an eye for this type of portrayal. Parents of older children and adolescents, on the other hand, should review movies and drama programs because these genres are most likely to contain realistic portrayals of the type defined above that pose high risk for more mature viewers.

Note

1. This article is a shortened version of the UCSB report appearing in the executive summary of the *National Television Violence Study* (Vol. 2), published by the Center for Communication and Social Policy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This synopsis was published with permission of the Center.

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A Review of Research on Media Violence in Japan

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People have always expressed concern about influences of media on their own society and especially on children. Among various media, TV is a medium to which strong attention has been paid for a long time.

In the past few years, "TV Violence" or "Media Violence" in a wider sense, including videos and video games, etc., seems to have been discussed more seriously than ever, from wider viewpoints, in more countries, and also as one of the great global issues. It is also one of the current characteristics of the various mass media, including TV, to frequently deal with this topic.

One of the international conferences in communications I attended in 1993 held a special session entitled "Global Television and TV Violence: do we need a code of practice?" organized by the members from Canada, where the negative effects of foreign TV programs have been taken as a serious problem.

With the progress of technology, our society itself has greatly changed in many aspects, including the changes in media environment, and at the same time society has faced difficulties in maintaining both the quality and quantity of its media. The flow of information world-wide has vastly increased, and the international flow of TV programs, including children's programs, has also expanded in many ways.

Recent international surveys and various conferences indicate that many TV producers in various parts of the world worry about the future of TV programs for children under the circumstances of the spread of commercialization of broadcasting and media environment in general. They strongly feel the necessity for some kind of international co-operation aimed at maintaining and developing the quality and diversity of programs for children for the new era.

In this article, I would like to discuss what we need for the future of "children's

TV" and "media environment for children" by reviewing the research with particular attention to "Media Violence" in Japan.[1]

Interest in the influence of TV in the early days of TV in Japan

Though the total volume of research related to TV violence in Japan might be relatively small, the topic itself has been regarded as an important issue since the early days of Japanese TV programming. Even before television was introduced in Japan in 1953, concern was expressed about its possible effects on society, especially on the negative effects TV violence could have on children.

In the early days of Japanese television, not only TV facilities, production techniques and TV programs, but also discussions on possible effects of this new medium, were very much influenced by the U.S. in many ways. For example, one Japanese educator who visited the U.S. in 1950 could not ignore the problems faced by U.S. educators and parents because of TV's influence on children's education, though he was very much impressed by the power of TV as a medium of information, and as a result his experience was introduced back in Japan.

Various aspects of TV violence concerns in the U.S. – including the news that the FCC Chairman had made a strong appeal to ban potentially harmful programs based on research findings, as well as Professor Lazarsfeld's statement that the time had come to conduct scientific studies on the effects of TV on children in 1954 – were also introduced in the Japanese media. These views caused quite a bit of concern for members of TV and government agencies in Japan.

As for the situation in TV programming in Japan in those days, professional wrestling programs were first broadcast in 1954 and became the first major targets of criticism for their effects on children. Some school children were seriously injured and one even killed, trying to imitate the wrestlers. In 1956, NHK excluded all professional wrestling programs from its broadcast schedule.

However, as commercial TV stations began to offer more mass entertainment over the following years, criticism and general concerns about TV increased. A national conference held by the Central Juvenile Problem Committee of the Prime Minister's Office in May 1958, concluded that the recent rapid increase in juvenile crimes mostly resulted from the negative influence of mass media and warned TV, film and publications industries to exercise better self-control over their contents. By 1960, NHK began to cut violent scenes from TV programs and some objectionable programs were canceled.

Resulting from these conditions, various research on the influence of TV on children, including the following large projects, was conducted from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties:

- NHK's Shizuoka Study (the First and the Second) by NHK Radio and Television Culture Research Institute (1957 and 1959)
- The Ministry of Education Study (a five-year project from 1958)

- National Association of Commercial Broadcasters' Study (a three-year project from 1960), a part of which was known as the University of Tokyo Survey.

These studies focused on various influences of TV as a new medium in Japanese society from a rather wide perspective: both favorable and harmful effects were investigated, including, in an indirect way, questions relating to violence on TV. Overall research results, however, indicated that there was no clear casual relationship between televiewing and aggressiveness of children.

In NHK's Shizuoka Study, for example, which was headed by Dr. Furu and is regarded as one of the four major studies on "TV and Children" along with those by Dr. Himmelweit (U.K.), Dr. Schramm (U.S.), and Dr. Maletzke (West Germany), the research interest was aimed principally at changes in behavior patterns brought about by prolonged exposure to TV. [1]

Changes in daily routine, influence on reading ability and achievements in science and social studies, as well as influence on mental state were analyzed. Regarding character formation, undesirable effects, such as development of passive attitudes or isolation from friends and a tendency toward escape into the world of fantasy, were not seen. When comparisons between heavy-viewing and light-viewing groups were made, it was found that comparatively more time was being taken from the time normally spent for homework and for doing household chores by the children of the heavy viewing group, but no consistent differences were seen in the field of intellectual skills and behavior tendencies. Neither were any significant differences discerned between heavy and light viewers in the tendency toward aggression.

In September 1960, after the 2nd Shizuoka Study, NHK's Research Institute conducted a different type of research to analyze the reactions of children (5th and 8th graders) and adults (parents of the 5th graders) to violence in TV programs, by including viewing of two western films for TV which were regarded as violent. [2]

The results indicated that violent scenes depicted with tools easy to get in daily life, such as knives, ropes, and chairs, were mentioned by parents as scenes they would not like to show their children. The children did not like these scenes, either. The research also indicated that this type of violence gave children a more violent impression and made them more unsettled than violent actions with guns and swords. Similar results were found in one of the studies conducted by the Ministry of Education.

Studies by NHK in those days suggested that the total atmosphere of TV programs could unsettle the children emotionally, even if the frequency of violent acts was not high.

Research trends from the 1960's to the 1970's

The above-mentioned decade starting from around 1955 was called the Golden Age of Studies on "Children and TV" in Japan.[2] The following decade (1965-1975) saw conclusions drawn by a number of researchers from studies on "Children and TV" carried out both in Japan and abroad.

As for the possible negative influences of TV on children, many researchers in those days concluded that there had been no noticeable impact on the intellectual development of children, and no substantial evidence to support the theory that TV viewing encourages passive and escapist tendencies in children. They agreed that other factors such as family environment and basic disposition of children are more responsible for children's aggressiveness, violent actions, and delinquency than the TV programs themselves. [3] Further studies were developed along this line: the 3rd Shizuoka Survey by NHK (1967) was one such study.

At the same time, however, the importance of content analysis of primary stimuli, TV programs in this case, was emphasized as essential to study the effects of media in a scientific manner; though it was also agreed that to develop a detailed framework to describe the characteristics of contents would not be easy at all. [4]

In the meantime, between the mid-sixties and the mid-seventies, there were various protests against "vulgar" programs. In 1969, one such nonsense/gag variety program by comedians popular in those days became a hot issue in the Broadcaster's Council for Better Programming, which had been established in 1956 to study public reactions to current programs and make recommendations for improvements in the programming of both NHK and commercial broadcasters.

In the same period, two series of superhero dramas with special effects often used to create vivid fighting scenes became extremely popular among Japanese children (boys). Most parents criticized the programs' violence and disliked the grotesque monsters shown in these programs. Imitation of violent actions became popular and tragic incidents took place, despite warning messages such as "Don't kick like this hero does! Don't imitate this jump!" being broadcast. There was also a lot of criticism from leading intellectuals.

However, there were explanations by specialists on child psychology referring to the social context as to why these programs became so popular. According to their analyses, Japanese children, goaded by their environment to study and strive, were given an opportunity to release their own pent-up energy vicariously through scenes of fighting between heroes and monsters and also through a character who could change into a superhero simply by shouting "change!".

In order to develop studies on "the influence of TV on society" under such conditions, emphasis on the analysis of program content became necessary in the next decade.

Content analysis and international comparative studies

Since the latter half of the 1970's, content analysis became popular in media studies in Japan, though not to the same extent as in the U.S.; analysis of portrayal of violence had always been included as an important factor there.

One such example in Japan was a series of analyses conducted by a citizen's group called FCT (Forum for Children's Television). In their analysis in 1982, various types of animated cartoons and drama programs were categorized into "violence by tools, weapons, magical powers", "physical violence", "verbal violence" and "violence to death", and it was found that home-drama-type animation tended to include more "verbal violence" as an essential element. [5]

In 1987, the same organization conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses on 15 action dramas of three types: "Japanese modern", "U.S. modern", and "Japanese historical". According to the analyses, there were quite a number of violent scenes especially "using weapons such as guns/rifles", but a relatively small number of "deaths" on those programs; thus, violence was depicted as unrealistic. So-called justified violence (as experienced by the viewer) was common to most of the programs analyzed, especially in *samurai* dramas. This study also suggested the importance of music in programs, since music attractive to the young might make even cruelly violent scenes unrealistic and rather attractive. [6]

Since 1977, another important series of content analysis studies involving Japan-U.S. international comparisons have been conducted by Iwao et al. Even before then, it was noted that foreigners, both researchers and broadcasters, visiting Japan had been surprised at the "violence" portrayed on TV and that some exported Japanese animation (especially robot-type cartoons popular in the 1970's in Japan) had been banned because of parents' protests, government decisions, etc., both in Europe and Asia.

Iwao's analysis of 139 dramatized entertainment TV programs broadcast between 5 and 11 p.m. in Tokyo in one week in July 1977 was very important, since it produced data on the amount and depiction of violence on Japanese TV for the first time, and in a way possible to compare with U.S. data by using the method developed by Gerbner. [7]

This study showed that while the amount of violence in these types of TV programs was not noticeably different between Japan and the U.S., the nature of the violence was quite different; Japanese TV portrayed violent actions and consequences more vividly, with much greater emphasis on the suffering of the victims. The researchers pointed out that this factor could lead to the U.S. visitors' impressions that Japanese TV was more violent.

The same study also indicated that violent scenes were concentrated in "police dramas", "cartoons" and "*samurai* dramas" and that detailed depiction of suffering was most frequently observed in the last category. In typical scenes from *samurai* dramas, more weight was given to the arousal of sympathy on the part of viewers for the victim, usually a hero rather than a villain. The prevailing theme was one of villains tormenting heroes who win out in the end. All these results suggested that the impression of whether a program was violent or not was largely influenced by how scenes were portrayed rather than the frequency of such scenes.

After the research of 1977, similar analyses were conducted by Iwao et al. every three years until 1989. Results from recent and/or cumulative data introduced some more interesting points. For example, the research showed that programs with high violence received lower audience ratings. [8]

The research covered a total of 585 TV dramas, or a total of 358 hours worth of TV dramas every three years for 12 years. Dramas aired from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. on five TV networks (NHK, NTV, TBS, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi) were sampled during week-long sample periods. Sampled dramas were videotaped and coded by trained coders, and divided into four categories: programs, characters, violent behaviors/scenes, and sexual behaviors/scenes. A result indicated a total number of 5,954 violent scenes aired, which makes a total of 16 hours, 26 minutes and 50 seconds. Also one of the findings of the first research in 1977 recorded that 727 characters on TV were injured and 557 characters died. The top ranked type of drama that contained the most violent scenes was Japanese historical (such as *samurai*) drama, and the same result appeared for every recorded period. Another significant finding was that dramas with many violent scenes tend to be unpopular, which may relate to the fact that the average number of violent scenes aired per program decreased from 6.7 times in 1983 to 4.2 times in 1986.

In another study conducted by the same U.S.-Japanese researchers in 1980 and 1981, *International Understanding via TV Programs*, the program *Shogun* was analyzed as part of the study. The results indicated that that drama, whose primary audience targets were U.S. viewers, was better liked than some popular typical U.S. dramas; at the same time, however, they felt the program was rather violent. Especially viewers with a lower education level, with little experience of Japanese culture, tended to perceive this program as more violent. The research concluded that U.S. viewers were not as tolerant of the type of violence depicted in *samurai* dramas as Japanese were. [9]

Another recent Japan-U.S. joint study of this kind in 1989/1990 indicated that Japanese dramatic programs on TV portrayed violence much more often than did U.S. programs. [10] Mikami's study constructed "a standard index for measuring an important aspect of two cultures, the U.S. and Japan, by analyzing the content of television messages systematically and to compare the index in time-series cross-cultural analysis". Dramatic programs aired from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. for one week on network television (5 Japanese networks and 3 U.S. networks) in both countries were videotaped and coded based on the codebook that was used in the sixteen country Cultural Indicators project.

As a result, 59.4% of the U.S. dramas contained violence as a subject while almost all (97.1%) Japanese dramas included some violence as a subject, which supported the statement made above. Sample television dramas of both countries were compared based on the common techniques of the message system analysis. There were some similarities found such as the characteristics of programs, character traits, and violence profiles. However, many differences between dramas in Japan and the United States were also found. One of the main differences lies in a culturally unique structure in both countries which influences the differences in program content. As an example, a major goal of Japanese characters may reflect a traditional spirit of "self-sacrifice or *Giri-Ninjo*". On the contrary, personal happiness and intimate relationship were found as tendencies in American characters. Mikami argues that the difference in content as far as violence and sex depiction is a result of different broadcasting policies/regulation in both countries as well; the regulation code seems to be more strict in the U.S. than in Japan.

There is another important study to be mentioned on this occasion. In 1988, AMIC (Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre) launched a research project to study violence on TV in Asia. Eight countries including Japan joined in this project, and this was the first scientific comparative study on this topic within this region, though the portrayal of violence on TV was a subject which had been of great concern not only to the general public and pressure groups but also to broadcasters and governments. Again, the research was based on Gerbner's design. [11][12]

Because of the limited number of programs on some particular TV channels in each country, and because participating countries had rather different backgrounds, the comparison of various data among those eight countries was rather difficult. But there were some interesting and significant results from comparisons of programs produced in Asia and those originating from the West (mostly U.S. programs).

Among the samples from this study, foreign programs throughout the eight countries had more violent incidents than local programs in general. More important was the cultural differences in the depiction of violence; some of the significant variations, from the viewpoint of impact on viewers, were depictions of violence in greater detail in the Asian programs and a tendency to glorify suffering of the victims. Heroes in Asian programs suffer violence as much or more than villains. The context of the violence also differs. In Asia violence depicted on TV is mostly caused by personal or interfamilial conflicts and not due to institutional factors as is commonly the case in Western programs.

In *Brief Abstract of Violence on Television in Asia* by Goonasekera and Yut Kam, the results showed the number of programs and the percentage of the samples of TV programs aired in eight Asian countries. The sample programs are both local programs and foreign programs, of which the countries of origin are also defined in the study. In a comparison of TV violence between programs of Western and Asian origin, the findings of the cultural differences in TV violence are as below:

Western origin	*Asian origin*
• More violent incidents	• Less violent incidents
• Less depiction of suffering victims	• Glorification of suffering
• Violence depicted in less detail	• Violence depicted in minute detail
• Sanitized violence. Little or no blood	• Blood commonly shown
• Both heroes and villains commit violence	• Both heroes and villains commit violence
• Hero suffers less violence than villains	• Hero suffers more violence than villains
• Villains from both upper and lower classes	• Villains mostly from upper classes
• Violence mostly within social and institutional conflicts	• Violence mostly due to personal vendettas, interfamilial conflicts
• Discourage violence except in cartoons	• Discourage violence
• Universal art form/low cultural discount	• Culture-specific programs

Results of long-term panel studies

In the 1980's, there were some important research projects which analyzed long-term effects of TV on children, with various related factors included for analysis.

The first example was a study conducted by a group of researchers affiliated with the National Institute of Mental Health. First in 1983, they tried to analyze the relationship between exposure to TV violence and aggressiveness in pre-school children, by taking their family backgrounds into consideration as important factors. [13]

There was no significant correlation between exposure to violence on TV and aggressiveness in daily life for the children analyzed in this study; however, when the analysis was limited to pre-school children whose parents were not getting along well, some important tendencies were observed. In such discordant families, the more children were exposed to violent programs, the more they were rated as aggressive.

In this research project, cohort analysis was planned from the beginning. Thus, five years later, in 1988-1989, the same set of children at the ages of 9 to 11 and their parents were studied again to analyze the long-term influence of televiewing habits and other factors from their pre-school years. [14]

This research indicated that primary-school-age children tended to watch violent programs when they had stress from unhappy or irritating experiences at home or at school, but there was no evidence that showed effects on children's aggressiveness in daily life. The researchers explained that the catharsis theory could be valid. As for long-term effects, the following was concluded: it is not possible to predict problem activities or anti-social activities at the primary school stage from the degree of exposure to televised violence in the pre-school stage; however, children who were heavy viewers of violent programs when they were pre-schoolers tended to lack the support networks necessary for mental health. Another very important result was that there was a correlation between the children's current aggressiveness and their mothers' tendencies to watch violent programs five years previously.

Another example was a three-year multipanel study conducted by a research group at the University of Tokyo. One of the important aims of this study was to attempt to analyze the influence of TV on pre-school children, in as natural conditions as possible, with a wider notion of independent and dependent variables taken into account. Kindergarten teachers were asked to rate various kinds of children's behaviors including not only aggressive actions, but also basic social knowledge, linguistic ability, play and areas of interest, etc., and mothers were asked to list the TV programs their children watched regularly at home, for three consecutive years. [15]

Though "influence of TV on aggressive actions of children" was only a part of the whole study, a positive cross-lagged correlation between the aggressiveness of the pre-school children in the first year and a preference for "heroic or SF programs (action-adventure cartoons and special effects action dramas)" in the second year was found in their Preliminary Study (1983-85). It was significant only for girls, though positive for boys also. The results of pass analyses indicated that aggressiveness caused a preference for violent TV programs, not vice versa. International comparison with the U.S., Sweden and Germany has started, and it is expected that the study will provide enriched analyses and interpretations of the research as a whole. [16]

Other empirical research on TV violence in the 1980's

A series of empirical research studies on TV violence and its influence on children during 1980's was conducted by Sasaki. [17] Past research on the influence of TV violence on children in Japan should be introduced as evidence of the power of media.

In *A Review of Empirical Studies on Television Violence* (1986), Sasaki adopted and revised four major existing theories of how people are influenced through viewing TV violence:

1) Catharsis, which posits that a vicarious participation in aggression reduces aggressive behavior.
2) Observational learning, by which aggressive behaviors depicted on television are learned and imitated by viewers.
3) Desensitization, through which people become used to violence, and are no longer upset or aroused by witnessing violence.
4) Enculturation, which assumes that a high exposure to television violence contributes to biased conceptions of social reality. [18]

Sasaki (1988) expected that enculturation is likely to occur when viewing TV programs that contain violence in settings which are more realistic and similar to the viewer's life. In order to find out about the relationship between the amount and the type of TV viewing and young viewers' perception of safety in the real world, a sample of 504 junior high school students was studied. The subjects were asked to pick their favorite TV program out of the list that was prepared for this study. The results showed no relation between the amount of TV viewing and the viewers' perception of safety in the real world and of trust in other people. However, some types of programs were found to affect viewers' perception of safety. If a program contains violence in a realistic setting of life similar to the viewers, such as "general dramas" rather than "crime-oriented programs", the viewers tend to learn what to do in case of the dangerous situation. It indicates that whether or not the influence of enculturation takes place depends on the type of TV program. [19]

When analyzing TV violence, it is often questioned which one of the following theories are true: "catharsis theory", according to which violent behavior is reduced by letting out stress through vicarious participation, or "observational learning theory", according to which the viewers imitate aggressive behavior. Sasaki (1989) conducted a study to define "which one of those theories takes place under what kind of situation" and "what kind of TV violence" has caused problems in viewers. The research classified violent TV programs into several categories by employing gratification types. Two types of surveys were conducted to categorize the types of gratification and to classify violent TV programs. The first survey involved 73 junior high-school students and 58 high-school students. The subjects were asked to list up to three programs they often viewed and to write an essay on how they felt after watching them. Thirty-three gratification items were categorized from the essays which were used in the second survey. The subjects sampled, 389 students, were asked to list up to three programs which they often saw and to answer 33 questions on a 5-point-scale. The seven gratification types were: diversion of the mind, identification with characters in the program, acquirement of knowledge, empathy, laughter, longing, and emotional diversion. Three types of violent programs were classified as follows by employing the seven gratification types: moving-violent programs, empathetic-violent programs, and funny-violent programs. The first type of violent program moved viewers and satisfied their knowledge gratification by showing historical facts. However, among the three types of violent programs, observational learning theory was anticipated in the second and the third types, while desensitization to violent behavior was predicted in the third type. [20]

As a follow-up study on the types of violent programs and on the four categories, *An Empirical Study of the Typology of Violent Television Programs* was conducted in 1993. The researcher intended to clarify the reason for the contradictory theories – for example, that the catharsis theory suggests that watching violence on TV reduces violent behavior while the observational learning theory suggests that TV violence increases aggressive behavior among viewers. The researcher hypothesized that "the types of effects based on the theory of catharsis, observational learning, desensitization, and cultivation correspond respectively to the types of violent programs based on gratification". A survey of 680 randomly sampled subjects was conducted. The results of this study were based on the 268 mail questionnaires sent back. The factor-analyzed data revealed four types of violent programs: divertive, empathic, intellectually satisfying, and laughter accompanying. The nature of the four types of violent programs were analyzed and it was shown that these types of violent programs correlated to the predicted effects of the four theories of television violence. The catharsis effect was related to divertive violent programs while the observational learning effect correlated with intellectually satisfying violent programs. The desensitization effect was related to laughter accompanying violent programs, and the cultivation effect was related to empathic violent programs. Thus, the researcher's hypothesis was confirmed. [21]

Sasaki and Muto (1987) studied the problem of "*ijime* (bullying)" among students from the viewpoint of TV violence. Many TV programs featured at least one scene that used *ijime* as a source of humour. Therefore, according to this fact, it was hypothesized that children who watch more *ijime* TV programs tend to bully others, and that children learn ways of bullying by viewing those programs more than through any other medium. Also, as the third hypothesis, children who watch many *ijime* programs tend to be desensitized to bullying behavior. A survey of 977 junior high-school students was conducted. The subjects were divided into a group of frequent viewers and a group of infrequent viewers, and were asked if they had bullied before. Bullying was defined in terms of the nine ways of bullying which were found in the sample of violent programs. The subjects were also asked how they learned their ways of bullying and what they would do if they were to witness a situation of bullying. The results of a chi square test supported the first hypothesis but not the others. The researchers suggested further study of desensitization using more sensitive and accurate measurement strategies. The results also indicated that in the process of learning bullying behavior, personal media as well as mass media seem to function as sources of acquiring bullying methods. The researcher concluded by suggesting that control of the portrayal

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of bullying behavior on TV is necessary. [22]

Past studies in the U.S. and Europe supported the relationship between the amount of violence viewed on TV and viewers' level of aggressiveness. Sasaki (1986) conducted a study in order to clarify the relation between the two variables in Japan. A sample of 473 (249 junior high and 224 high school) students were asked to pick up to five programs from 25 violent programs and to answer 20 questions about their daily violent behavior. The results supported the hypotheses. The second purpose of the study was to clarify the relationship between the violence viewed on TV and the viewers' degree of desensitization to violent scenes. The researcher hypothesized that the more TV violence people watch the more used to it they become. The result indicated that there is a positive relation only among senior high school students, which could mean that the longer people are exposed to TV violence the more accustomed to it they become. The third purpose of this study was to find out about the influences of different types of violence on viewers' aggressiveness and on the degree of desensitization. Iwao's three categories of violent television programs – random violence, purposive violence, and passive violence programs – were used. The results showed no positive relationship between the amount of violence viewed on TV and the level of desensitization. However, there was a positive relationship between the amount of violence viewed on TV and the viewers' aggressiveness. The relationship was stronger when viewing random and passive violence than when viewing purposive violence. [23]

Research by specialists in juvenile delinquency

Research on the influence of media has been conducted not only by media researchers and child psychologists but also by researchers in criminal psychology. Various important studies conducted by the National Research Institute of Police Science tried to analyze relations between access to mass media and various other factors affecting children and delinquency/deviant behavior in juveniles. The researchers had the advantage of being able to include both average children and juvenile delinquents as research subjects. The depiction of delinquency and deviant behavior represented in the mass media – not only in fictional programs but also in nonfictional programs – has been focused on recently by researchers.

One such study, conducted in 1983, tried to determine characteristics of high school students who tended to conform to such mass media depictions. Results showed that those students tended to have complaints about family and school life, and had had more experiences of violent actions and/or of being victims. [24]

As a part of a more recent research project on the influence of organized criminal gangs *(boryokudan)* on juveniles conducted by the same institute in 1991, the juveniles' perceptions of *boryokudan* represented in the mass media were closely analyzed. The following are the main results from the study. [25]

First of all, mass media was the major source of information on *boryokudan* for both high school students and delinquents. Sources included both nonfictional reports such as TV news and newspaper articles, and fiction such as TV dramas, movies and novels. In general, average students got their information mainly from nonfictional reports, while delinquents relied more heavily on fictional sources.

Nonfictional reports on ***boryokudan*** tend to form negative images of ***boryokudan*** as terrifying, selfish, brutal, and so on. Fiction concerning ***boryokudan***, on the other hand, tends to form relatively few negative images which, in some cases, are mixed with rather positive images such as sympathy, having a spirit of unity, and masculinity. Moreover, it is important to note that such fictional depictions tend to be regarded as reality by delinquents.

As for both high school students and delinquents, those who have frequent access to media reports on ***boryokudan*** are more likely to form positive images of ***boryokudan*** than those who rarely have access to such information. This tendency is more evident in delinquents than in average high school students.

Here again, the cause-and-effect relationship between access to media/depiction of media and unfavorable behavior and attitudes has not been clarified. Researchers in this field seem to be rather cautious about regarding mass media as a cause of juvenile delinquency. On this point, there is a very interesting and important insight by Fujimoto, a specialist in criminology in his paper *Can Mass Media Be a Cause of Juvenile Delinquency?* [26]

By reviewing the history of juvenile delinquency after W.W.II and countermeasures by government agencies, he pointed out that in each of the three peak periods of juvenile countermeasures by delinquency, mass media popular in each period became the target of criticism: movies in the first peak around 1951, TV in the second peak around 1964, and a variety of media including new types of comics for teens in the third peak around 1983. He hypothesized that it was natural for specialists to pay attention to mass media as a possible influential cause in each period that juvenile delinquency peaked, but that it is difficult to say whether or not those media were causes of juvenile delinquency, because there was not enough time lag between peak times of delinquency and countermeasures actually taken.

Recent research trends: Another boom in media research?

Next, I would like to introduce the most recent trends in research concerning depictions of violence, sex and other unfavorable subjects in the media. Since about 1987, there have been public debates on pornographic comics, video software (especially "horror videos" and "adult videos"), computer-game software (violence, sex), etc, on various occasions.

Government agencies have not only requested self-regulation by the concerned organizations, but have also conducted new research for further discussion and possible countermeasures. As for video software, the seriousness of the issue has been increased since a series of assaults on young girls from 1988 to 1989 was committed by a young adult who possessed nearly 6,000 video tapes including some "horror videos" in his room.

Tokyo Metropolitan Government (which had conducted various studies on children and youth, and on media) conducted a study on videos in 1991 and also on the multi-media environment more generally, with a focus on computers in 1992. The research in 1991 indicated, for example, that heavy video viewers (more than 7 hours per week) had a positive and open-minded tendency, but at the same time were a little more aggressive and unethical than average. According to their parents, those children had inferiority complexes and problem behavior such as delinquency and violence at home. [27]

It was also found through parental observation that children who often watched "horror videos" were uncooperative and aggressive. Children who often viewed "adult videos" seemed to have more problems. They tended to watch them alone in their own rooms late at night. They tended to have various troubles, were more aggressive and unethical, and had more instances of problem behavior and sexually deviant behavior.

One of the important findings of this research was a lack of adult understanding of the seriousness of the problems. For example, parents whose children often watched adult videos regarded their own children as having tendencies toward delinquency, but left their children to view those videos relatively freely. A little more than half of the video shops surveyed in this research answered that horror videos and adult videos had a negative influence on children, but almost no shops had self-regulation on selling or renting this kind of software because of financial considerations.

The Youth Affairs Administration, Management and Coordination Agency of the Prime Minister's Office conducted a nation-wide survey to collect basic data on the media environment surrounding youth in Japan in 1991. In 1992, the same Administration conducted a more specific study on the influence of current media centered on pornographic comics; this is one of the most serious subjects of concern in Japan. [28]

It was found that children who have access to porno-comics tended not only to have sex but also to produce violent and other deviant behavior, and that these tendencies were especially prevalent among junior high students rather than among senior high students. Here again, it was found that parents of those students underevaluated the media situation affecting their children.

Literature review on computer game violence

It has been over a decade since computer games were produced in Japan and introduced to the market that targets children. Although there have been many studies concerning the negative aspects of computer games on children, it was said that computer games play an important role in the formation of media literacy (Yuji and Mori 1995). Computer games may well contribute to and play an important role in the information-oriented society with multimedia. This notion was supported by a study showing that children who use computer games have faster information processing skills (Yuji 1996). The following studies give some insight into the pro's and con's of computer games.

A study on the use of computers among students of age 10 to 15 (primary school and junior high school students) and the influence of computer use on such psychological variables as level of creativity, motivation to achieve, and social development, was conducted by Sakamoto, Hatano and Sakamoto (1992) [29]. The subjects sampled, 663 students, were asked how frequently they use computers; this information was later on compared to indices used to determine social development. The results indicated lower levels of creativity, motivation to achieve, and social development among male students in grade school who play games on computer, while male-grade-school students who use computer for word-processing had higher levels of creativity and motivation to achieve. Also male grade-school students who use computers for programming had higher levels of creativity. At the grade-school level, the correlation of frequency of use with these various psychological variables was lower for female students than it was for male students, and male junior high school students who played games on computers had higher levels of cognitive complexity.

Similar to the study conducted by Sakamoto et al. (1992), Sakamoto (1992) conducted research focused on the relationship between the frequency of children's use of video games and some psychological variables, such as social development, aggressiveness, attitude toward war, sociometric status in classroom, and school achievement. As children are in a personality forming stage and are still developing, it is possible that they are easily influenced by the use of video games. It has been said, though not scientifically proven, that children who use video games frequently and who do not often communicate with others would develop their social skills slower than those who do not use video games. By measuring the sample subjects' level of empathy, cognitive complexity, cognitive centrality, and cooperativeness as components of social development, the researcher intended to clarify the relationship between the frequency of children's use of video games and the level of social development. The sample population was 392 children of age 10 to 14 (primary school and junior high school students). The children were divided into two sub-groups in order to distinguish communication level: a group who usually play alone and a group who play with others. The results indicated that male primary school students who used video games frequently had a low level of both social development and school achievement and had a positive attitude toward war. There was no significant difference between children who played video games alone and those who played them with other children. Also, junior high school students who used video games frequently showed a high level of cognitive complexity. The study found that primary school students (male) "who played video games frequently obtained their popularity among classmates through their skills with video games". [30]

Most of the previous studies have focused mainly on the negative aspects and effects of computer games. In order to find out if there are any positive effects of playing computer games, Yuji (1996) conducted a study to assess the relationship between the use of computer games and information-processing skills. As computer games require high parallel information-processing skills and quick reaction times, it is assumed that players' information-processing skills are developed as well. The subjects for this study were a total of 46 (25 boys and 21 girls) kindergartners. The sample was divided into two groups according to the frequency level of their use of computer games. Pictures were used as stimuli to test the subjects' information-processing skills. Stimuli were four combinations of two colors and two shapes of frogs: a big-eyed green frog, a small-eyed green frog, a big-eyed pink frog, and a small-eyed pink frog. After Stimulus 1 was shown in the center of the computer display for two seconds, four patterns of Stimulus 2 appeared on the screen for one second. Then the subjects were tested to omit different colors and shapes from the first stimuli picture as soon and correct as possible. The results indicated that children who play computer games had excellent perceptual skills, motor skills, and information-processing skills. The researcher suggested that further study and comprehensive examination of computer games should be conducted, as such games may play an important role in the information-oriented society with multimedia. [31]

Yuji and Mori (1995) conducted a content analysis of game software. The purpose of this study was to define the content on covers of game packages, to analyze how much violence is included in action game videos, and to study the problem involving gender and aggressiveness. The results showed that most of the existing computer games are male oriented and clearly involve high levels of violence. However, the researcher insisted that there was no relationship between these contents and children who use such software learning about male-female discrimination and becoming more aggressive. The importance of this study can be seen from the point of view of media literacy. That is, the results showed that computer games play an important role in the formation of media literacy. If the male dominating and violence oriented content of computer games results in driving female consumers away, this is a problem which needs to be solved, as the author insisted. [32]

Mori and Yuji (1995) conducted another study with a slightly different perspective from their previous one – they analyzed the contents of computer games and compared them with those of TV programs. The study showed the existence of TV violence on computer games. The results indicated not only that violence and gender differences in computer games are based on TV programs, but also that the frequency of violent scenes is higher in such games than on TV. [33]

Children's viewing habits and concerns of parents and teachers

Parents

Questions addressing what parents and teachers think about the effects of television on children have been included in various ways in many surveys to date. While the largest number of respondents replied that TV has both favorable and unfavorable effects, those who replied "more unfavorable effects" outnumbered those who replied "more favorable effects".

The main concerns of parents are children's imitations of violence, bad language in TV programs and commercials, and possible harm to children's emotional development. But Japanese parents do not seem to be very strict about televiewing habits at home and children are relatively free to choose whatever programs they like and to watch them when they like. [34] [35]

For example, about half of 1-2 year olds take the initiative in turning on the TV and watch without any adult nearly half of their total viewing hours. After reaching age 3 to 4, children tend to watch TV more often by themselves or with other children, rather than with their parents.

Children up to 2 years old watch with great interest various TV programs intended especially for pre-school children; almost all these pre-school programs today are broadcast by NHK, the nation's only public broadcaster. Among these, *With Mother* (1959 -), which is the longest-running children's program in Japan, has been especially popular among Japanese children and parents. (*With Mother* is similar to BBC's *Playschool* or *Playdays*.) Many start watching this program even before their first birthday.

Even infants below one year old show a considerable response to TV; surveys indicate that in the case of infants 4 to 7 months old, more than half show interest in the sounds and pictures of the TV screen, and that infants begin playing with TV sets by switching them on and off as early as the age of 6-7 months, since TV sets nowadays are quite easy to handle. More than one-fourth of 8-9 month olds imitate hand-clapping and more than half of one-year-olds mimic callisthenics on TV. Furthermore, children between ages 1 1/2 and 2 are seen more and more imitating songs and spoken words heard on TV programs and commercials. [36]

Children past age three become increasingly interested in animated cartoons, SF fantasy dramas with special effects, and variety shows for general audiences mostly broadcast on commercial channels, as their interest in pre-school programs declines. Differences appear around age 3 or 4 in the program preference of boys and girls. (Boys like programs which include actions they can imitate and use later in play with friends, while girls prefer family-type stories.) Role-playing by imitating characters on TV becomes popular at the age of three and four. As for imitating violent actions and vulgar language, 50 percent of children showed at least some such influence from TV. This tendency is stronger among boys, frequent viewers, and also among children whose mothers are rather strict about their children's televiewing. Children in this age group also want to own toys and games, books, stationery or clothes and bags associated with favorite TV characters.

As for family rules about children's TV viewing, in the case of 1-2 year olds, "what to view" is the biggest concern of parents; then as children grow, their parents' concerns move to "total viewing hours a day" and "when to view" rather than program contents. One reason why Japanese parents are not very strict about children's TV viewing can be explained as follows. Since popular programs invariably tend to become the subjects of exchanges (through role-playing, imitating characters, and conversations) among their play group or at school, children who are ignorant about such TV programs often find themselves left out. Parents worry quite seriously that their children will be ignored or treated badly by their friends.

Teachers

Unfortunately the first impression many people have of Japanese children's TV programs seems to be of animated cartoons and SF dramas often with violent actions and/or vulgar expressions. However, many visitors from other countries are surprised at the existence of other kinds of programs, including a variety of school broadcasting from kindergarten through senior high school levels and also other kinds of quality programs for children's home viewing, including *TV Picture Books* (stories), *Fun with English, I Can Do That Myself!* (cooking and other how-to topics), *Music Fantasy: Dramas* (classical music) and *News for Children* (weekly news magazine for children and parents) provided on both of the NHK's terrestrial TV Channels (General TV and Educational TV), and one of the NHK's two DBS Channels.

As for TV school broadcasting, it started in Japan in 1953. From the very beginning, an organization called the All-Japan Teachers' Federation for Studying the Use of Radio and TV in Education has played an important role, contributing to progress in the effective use of broadcasting and improving the quality of programs, in close co-operation with NHK.

The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has conducted nation-wide *School Broadcast Utilization Surveys* since 1950. The purpose of the surveys is to get basic data on the dissemination of audio-visual equipment and the use of NHK's radio and TV school broadcasts, and also to evaluate programs through teachers' observation and to study teachers' attitudes towards various media. The data are used as a basis for discussion on the further development of school broadcasting and related materials.

As of 1996-97, 95% of Japan's primary schools were making use of NHK's TV school programs. The rate was 54% for kindergartens and 70% for nursery schools.

Some of the NHK's school broadcasts have been sent to various countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa – broadcast in their local languages – with some financial support from Japan in response to requests from these countries. This, however, might not be widely known. Not only programs, but various specialists in producing educational programs have been sent from NHK to these countries to assist in development of their own educational broadcasting.

More than 95% of Japanese children go to either kindergartens or nursery schools before their entrance to primary schools at the age of six. And teachers of kindergartens and nurseries recognize the overall influence of TV on children most frequently, both the positive and negative effects.

One of NHK's surveys in 1996 indicated that in 73% of the kindergartens throughout Japan teachers answered that the children's language deteriorated as a result of their imitating TV vocabulary, 65% reported that children sometimes acted roughly by imitating TV violence – kick-boxing, professional wrestling, jumping down from high places, imitating gun fights, etc. – and 56% believed that TV had some harmful effects on the emotional development of children, for example, misunderstanding of the concept of "death". These are all examples from entertainment programs chosen by children themselves and watched at home, often without adults, as already mentioned.

As for television's overall influence on small children, many teachers answered that "there are more bad influences than good". This negative view held by teachers seems to be connected with their reluctance to use TV at kindergartens and nursery schools, and it may well have contributed to the gradual decline in use of educational TV for children since the beginning of the 1980's. Some teachers explained that they do not want to use TV, since children spend quite a lot of time watching TV at home. (Though children's total viewing hours are less than that of the adults as it is in many other countries. According to NHK's survey in 1996, preschool children between 4 and 6 years watched TV for an average of 2 hours and 21 minutes a day, and those in primary school, 2 hours and 13 minutes; the average daily viewing hours for all Japanese over 7 years old was 3 hours and 34 minutes.)

However, there is an obvious difference between the programs children choose to watch on their own at home and those used at kindergartens and nursery schools under the guidance of teachers. Considering the fact that this gap widens as children grow older, and that proper discipline regarding TV viewing is generally not given strongly at home, kindergartens and nursery schools could have an important role in education about media, by helping children cultivate a more selective attitude towards TV and various other media, including videos and video games. [37]

Further development of research

As various studies have already indicated, it is very difficult to explain clear-cut "cause-and effect" relations between exposure to violence in the media and aggressiveness of children in real-life. Even so, it is important to further develop research on "multiple effects of media violence on our society" with more sophisticated and newer approaches and methods, especially under circumstances where the portrayal of various kinds of violence and other unfavorable subjects have been increasing and seem to be becoming more and more vivid, not only on TV but also in many other media such as video software, video games, comics, cinema, etc. In this context, as a researcher in the area "Children and Media", I am particularly interested in the following three aspects.

Research on "media violence"

The first is the importance of more precise analysis of "the possibility of different effects of media violence in different cultures". Though there have been some studies in this area so far, we still need more precise and deep analysis.

There seem to be types of violent expression which can be understood and felt in a similar way in most societies around the world. However, there seem to be other types of violence, as well, that is "violence" which is felt and understood quite differently depending on the viewers' culture. In other words, some particular depictions which are acceptable to one society might be seen as too violent in another society. Moreover, children and adults in each culture might have different perceptions and attitudes.

From my own experience through discussions with researchers from various countries, I feel the necessity for a scientific analysis on this point. By analyzing various reactions of both children and adults to the same TV programs in societies with different cultural backgrounds (and also international experiences), we would be able to learn how similarly and differently people perceive the same visuals and show their reactions to "violence" and other depictions in the media. It is, of course, very important to analyze the mechanism of how and to what degree such depictions of violence could affect behavior and attitudes of the viewers, especially children, via a long-term study. This kind of international research could be useful and important not just for discussions on media violence but for international co-operation in media development as a whole, including effective exchanges of TV programs and ideas related to children's use of media. [38]

Emphasis on the positive aspects of the media

My second point is the necessity for emphasis on the positive aspects of the media; that is, the importance of development of research and related activities to create and widely distribute TV programs and video software, etc., favorable for and attractive to the viewers, especially to children. I have been working along these lines at NHK's Research Institute, and this approach was one of the characteristics of research on "Children and Media" throughout the 1980's in Japan. [39]

We have been studying both TV programs and children's reactions to programs in various ways to give helpful data to our producers for improvement of current programs and also for development of new programs. Various programs of NHK's School Broadcasting already introduced have been developed based on many kinds of studies. Many other studies, especially for young children, have been conducted by the Research Project on TV (Media) Programming for Two-Year-Olds since 1978.

This project requires the co-operation of TV producers of NHK, media researchers such as myself, and specialists in various fields such as developmental psychology and pedagogy, etc., and attempts primarily to develop quality programs for young children between 2 and 4 years who are the heaviest viewers among children in Japan and who are also at the most important stage in learning viewing habits. The researchers have adopted the method of viewing-experiments with a distracter. These studies are carried out in an experimental room using test-produced programs, and involve analysis of various reactions of children (such as viewing attention, verbal reactions, and various non-verbal reactions). [40][41]

With support from the studies within this project, various new programs have been developed for young children. When a new Yoga callisthenics segment was planned to be introduced in *With Mother*, NHK's pre-school daily series, eight segments were produced under different conditions: performers, variety and number of Yoga poses, amount of instruction, etc. The responses of 2-year-old children to each segment were recorded and analyzed, and several suggestions were given to the producers: the smaller the number of poses, the more the children tended to watch the segment. Children showed more imitation if they were given more instruction. "Talking to viewers" instruction was positively correlated with imitation by children. As a result, improvements were achieved for the final production of a Yoga segment called

Hi, Pose for broadcasting. According to another study conducted after the start of broadcasting of this newly developed segment, imitating the movements of this segment was most popular among children age 2 to 2 1/2, the core target audience.

Another good example is the one-minute animation series *Kids Like Us* which was also introduced as a part of *With Mother*. In this case, the members of the research project began working to develop this new idea, based on the research results from a wide range of earlier studies. After much discussion, it was decided to produce various characters reflecting typical traits and behavior of children between 2 and 3 years old (such as tendencies to be hard-to-please, mischievous, untidy, gluttonous, forgetful, etc.) and each segment features understandable, simple stories, just one or two minutes long.

The purpose of this animation was to let children watch these characters repeatedly, in various different stories, then reflect on their own behavior, and also learn the fact that there are various types of people in our society. One important decision was not to give comments such as "Don't do this" or "Do this", since it is important for children in this age group to learn how to judge their own behavior.

The experiment as a formative research was conducted with the same method for the final production of *Kids Like Us*. Follow-up surveys held after the start of broadcasting, through mothers' observation of their children's reactions and also observations of some specialists, showed that this new series was achieving the main projected goals. [42]

Though it takes a lot of manpower, a large budget and time to conduct these types of experiments and surveys, it is very important and meaningful, of course, for producers and researchers. Moreover, it is very meaningful to give parents opportunities to think about the quality of TV programs for children through these various studies.

There is another example I would like to introduce. That is an interdisciplinary project focusing on the influence of TV on toddlers, infants and fetuses conducted under leadership of the President of the National Children's Hospital. This project consists of a pediatrics group, a cultural anthropology group and a media research group. It is an especially important feature in this project that many specialist pediatricians have joined the studies on TV.

For example, one of the studies indicates that even infants (8-months old) may recognize pictures on TV in a way similar to adults. In another study, pediatricians discovered a response indicating abnormal behavior in an 18 month old toddler, first by a questionnaire about televiewing habits at home answered by her mother. A follow-up clinical examination revealed that this toddler was hearing-impaired. An observational study was carried out to assess the behavior of handicapped children toward TV in an experimental environment, and a group of pediatricians started thinking about developing new sensory test methods using television.

Though this project paid attention both to the positive and negative effects of TV, the basic approach was to understand the meaning of "watching TV" in today's society and to find out how this medium could effectively be used to benefit mankind. [43] [44]

Importance of education on media

Finally, I would again like to emphasize the importance of education on media. As I have already mentioned, this is, of course, very important for children as a vital step in learning how to watch TV and how to enjoy other media in a way which will benefit them. As children grow older and their understanding of the mechanism of the media deepens, various media can be important tools which children can use to express themselves. It is also very important for adults to understand the newest media environment as a whole both for themselves, and also for giving effective advice to children from various view points: as a parent, as a teacher, as a provider of various software for children.

Concluding remarks

Though analysis and discussion of negative aspects of media is, of course, necessary, I feel strongly that it is equally important to pay attention to positive aspects of the same media, in order to encourage and increase desirable output from each media and thus to make the total media environment around us beneficial to the future of our children.

In this context, various forms of co-operation would become more and more important, including interdisciplinary and international co-operation. There has been a clear trend among members responsible for researching, producing and broadcasting children's programs and educational programs, towards seeking new forms of effective international co-operation in a wider sense now than ever before. [45]

I believe that it is essential to think of children's growth, education and media development not in terms of one nation or society, but rather from a global viewpoint, in terms of the future of all humanity. With so many countries now paying special attention to "Media Violence", it is my wish that those concerned utilize this "trend" and think of it as a wonderful chance for us to work in harmony to reach a favorable solution which will put an end to the problem once and for all, and at the same time enhance the often neglected positive side of media as a whole.

Several researchers in the past have said that the Japanese society tends to react according to a catharsis theory more than other cultures in the world, thinking of the fact that Japan has a relatively low crime rate and at the same time a large amount of violent media contents, at least so far. There is no scientific proof of the theory yet. It could be that the Japanese tend to relieve their stress by watching aggressive TV programs and by playing violent video games. However, it was also mentioned earlier, that the "violence" in the Japanese dramas is often followed by scenes showing the after-effects of victims and the process of their suffering, something which may decrease the tendency towards aggressive attitudes and behaviors among the Japanese viewers.

Many of the past studies have found the power of media to be a source of negative influence. However, if the effects of media are so strong, it is possible that the media could be used for something positive. Researchers should place more emphasis on how to make positive use of the power of media for children in the future.

A future study needs to be conducted with an emphasis on the possibility that cultural differences, and differences in individual experience, play a role as factors which determine the perception of "violence" (in the real world and in the media). Findings from such a study might be beneficial for future TV program productions and exchanges. Past international studies on TV violence, in which Japan also took part, proved that there are different characteristics in violent scenes between Japan and the U.S. and among other Asian programs. As regards how we perceive such violent scenes, research suggests that there is an existing disparity due to cultural difference and cross-cultural experience/understanding.

Growing international concern about the nature of children's rights prompted the organization of the Japan Prize Contest to hold a symposium entitled "Listen to Children – Children's Rights and Television" in November 1996. (Japan Prize is an international contest for educational programs established in 1965 and organized by NHK.) There were quite a number of programs from different parts of the world entered in the Contest that dealt with children's rights from various viewpoints, such as child abuse, peer pressure, bullying, children in poverty, children in war, and so on. The thrust of the arguments among specialists in educational programs was that children should be made aware of their rights and allowed to have a say in how educational programs both for children and for adults should be produced.

Therefore, I recommend that future media researchers conduct further studies that would encourage the points raised during the symposium, and that the media business people concentrate on positive use of the power of media in order to create more favorable TV (media) environments.

Notes

1. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not the official views of NHK.
2. In addition to the kinds of studies introduced here, NHK conducted a series of studies on educational programs for children and school broadcasts, by using a program analyzer, primarily to improve those programs but also to develop new ones.

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Children, Media and Aggression

Current Research in Australia and New Zealand

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This article offers an overview of recent and current Australian and New Zealand research relating to the topic of children and aggression in the media. We set the terms of our account fairly broadly, to include research addressed to the perennial questions of the effects of overtly aggressive content, as well as the perceptions and responses of the audience (children and parents). We consider also related topics such as the representations of ethnic minority groups in the media, crime programs, and media treatment of sexual abuse. Hence, 'aggression' here includes forms of physical violence as well as symbolic intimitation and oppression. We concentrate mainly on research published since 1990 (and forthcoming), but occasionally touching on earlier work where it is relevant.

Our goal is to illustrate the range of recent research and perspectives. We have not attempted to provide critical evaluations of the research. However, we do offer comments where we believe researchers' findings prompt further investigation and lead to interesting new lines of inquiry. First, we sketch the background with a summary of debates about the media in the two countries. Then, we turn to what we will loosely label 'effects' issues: for example, do young people become more aggressive as a result of viewing aggressive TV content or playing violent computer games? Next, we turn to the consumers themselves, discussing work addressed to children's interpretations and understanding of media content. Finally, we review findings of several projects that relate to parental mediation and intervention.

Research and policy background

There has been a long tradition of interest among Australian and New Zealand researchers in children's and adolescents' responses to television content, including aggressive content (e.g., Edgar, 1977; Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Ling & Thomas, 1986; McCann & Sheehan, 1985; Noble, 1975; Palmer, 1986; Sheehan, 1986; Shuker, 1990). Debate about media content and regulation is healthily vigorous in both countries. In Australia, the Office of Film and Literature Classification, the body charged with classifying most of the audiovisual media marketed in the nation, holds an annual conference in which classification officers, politicians, civil servants, media representatives, academics and others meet to discuss research and policy issues. The Australian Broadcasting Authority, the organisation responsible for developing and monitoring standards of television and radio broadcasting publishes regular newsletters on current issues in these media. Both bodies undertake extensive research into issues relating to media classification, community standards and concerns and patterns of media use (Aisbett, Paterson, & Loncar, 1992; Paterson & Hellmers, 1993; Paterson & Loncar, 1991; Sheldon, Aisbett, & Herd, 1993). In New Zealand, the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) undertakes or commissions similar research (Bassett & Shuker, 1993; Watson, 1992, 1993; Watson, Bassett, Lambourne, & Shuker, 1991). The BSA also fosters debate about issues such as aggression in the media (e.g., National Television Violence Seminar Papers, 1991). Recent debates in either or both of the countries have included concern about the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, the television broadcast of movies with M level violence during mid-evening, the content of Pay TV, the viability of the 'V' chip, the regulation of computer games, and children's access to adult materials on the Internet.

There is a keen awareness of the principal enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children have a 'right to be protected from material harmful to them' (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, 1990a; Abbott, 1992; Biggins, 1995; Griffith, 1996). This priority is acknowledged in the legislation governing the work of bodies such as the ABA, OFLC and BSA. It is promoted by pressure groups such as Young Media Australia, a training and advocacy organisation which publishes *Small Screen*, a monthly review of events and publications relating to the effects of films, television, video games and new media on children. In New Zealand, there is an array of similar groups and the Mental Health Foundation has conducted an extensive and apparently effective campaign to force public broadcasters to reduce the amount of violence on television (Abbott, 1992).

As in other countries, there are diverse opinions about the influence of violent television content upon young viewers, and about the kinds of responses that policy makers, parents, and professionals should make (Abbott, 1992; Biggins, 1995; Hodge, 1989; Prior, 1995). For example, the Australian College of Paediatrics (1994) has published a clear and strong statement that the sheer quantity of time spent with television indicates that 'television viewing must rate as a critical influence on the development of children', that a regrettable part of this influence is due to the (increasing) violent content, that 'there is a relationship between viewing violent television and aggressiveness' and that '(v)iewing of television violence can also reduce inhibitions against aggression and lead to a belief that solving problems through violence means is 'normal' and acceptable' (p. 6). Paediatricians, the statement concludes, have a role in bringing the pervasive effects of television to the attention of parents, and in promoting healthier uses of the medium.

On the other hand, there are sceptics. Among these, Hodge (1989) argues forcefully that ideological assumptions about the nature of children (as vulnerable innocents in need of protection or as potentially wicked savages in need of restraint) fuel much of the Australian debate and policy concerning the desirability of certain types of television content. These assumptions are often compounded, he suggests, by middle class elitism in the arena of cultural choices. Hodge argues that the regulation of children's television content can serve to counter the wishes (and hence the rights) of children themselves, by depriving them of programmes they wish to see and inflicting other programmes that arguably well intentioned adults like but many young viewers do not. 'If anyone bothered to listen to what they [children] see and say, it would quite spoil the game' (p. 170).

When members of the public are asked if they have concerns about any aspects of what is currently shown in television, the most common topic, mentioned spontaneously by about 25 - 30% of the sample, is violence (based on Australian data, reported in Paterson & Loncar, 1991). Concern with violence tends to vary with the age, gender and parental status of the respondent – older people, women, and parents tend to be more likely to register concern. About 44 - 47% of respondents indicate that they have no concerns or 'don't know.' Studies of people who complain about television content (either to the ABA or directly to a broadcasting company) confirm that violence is their foremost concern (Aisbett et al., 1992). Audience research indicates widespread community support for classification schemes, generally high awareness of what the classification symbols (e.g., G, PGR, M, R,[1] etc.) stand for, and frequent reference to the symbols when making viewing decisions (Paterson & Hellmers, 1993).

There is a strong civil libertarian tradition in Australia, and a majority of the community appears to prefer informed consumer choice to censorship of the media. In a large scale study of community attitudes towards the acceptability of 'R' rated content on Pay TV, the ABA found that 82% of respondents agreed that adults should have the option of watching R rated programs, and 69% agreed that R-rated movies provide entertainment which is of interest to many adults and should be available to them. 69% thought that R-rated violence should be permitted in this context. Most (85%) felt that, if R rated programs were to be shown on Pay TV, then it would be important to receive information about them before they were broadcast (Australian Broadcasting Authority, 1994).

In sum, violence in the media is a perennial focus of concern in Australia and New Zealand, as in many other countries. The topic is debated and investigated within a social climate characterised by a wide range of ideological positions, a strong community concern for the well-being of children, and a majority commitment to adult freedom of choice in media use.

Effects: the impact of television and computer game content

Effects studies appear not to be prevalent in contemporary research in Australia and

New Zealand. However, there are some exceptions, and there is certainly continuing interest in the issues. We discuss examples here concerning television and computer games.

Television

The media do not operate, of course, in a sociocultural vacuum. Often, messages about aggression are consonant with other values promoted in children's lives or with activities in which they are encouraged to engage (Sanson & Prior, 1989). An obvious example is aggressive toys. These afford children practical means to play act events and behaviours that may coincide with television content, or even be inspired by it. Furthermore, many of these toys are marketed via children's television, either in overt advertisements or as products associated with specific programs and characters.

Following Huesmann's (1986, 1988) information processing account of the effects of viewing aggressive media, Sanson and Di Muccio (1993) reasoned that exposure to violent cartoons and subsequent play with toys based on the cartoon series should provide children an opportunity to rehearse aggressive scripts derived from or strengthened by the programs. Children aged 4 to 5 years in small mixed gender groups viewed for 21 minutes either an aggressive cartoon or a neutral cartoon, and then played for 15 minutes with either aggressive toys or neutral toys (the toys were commercial products based on the cartoon materials), and for another 15 minutes with the opposite set of toys; other children participated as controls, also playing with the toys but not viewing either of the cartoons.

Several measures of aggressive behaviour and prosocial behaviour were collected prior to viewing (i.e., to establish baselines) and after viewing. The results are complex, and are reported separately for working class and middle class participants. However, they do demonstrate higher levels of aggressive behaviours in children who were both exposed to the violent cartoon and played with aggressive toys; prosocial behaviour was low in these children. The authors are careful to note order effects, gender differences and considerable individual differences among the participants, with a majority of children showing no aggression, and two boys contributing a great deal. They conclude that the results justify public concern about the effects of heavily promoted antisocial toys representing aggressive cartoon characters.

Sanson et al.'s definitions of aggressive behaviour were clear and well operationalised, but one issue which remains open to future research relates to the children's intentions and the severity of their behaviour. The researchers counted the incidences of a range of verbal and physical acts, some of which might well be more aggressive than others (e.g., *destroys property* vs. *boasts* or *brags*), and some could be playful rather than designed to hurt (e.g., *wrestling, shooting guns* – we assume these Melbourne preschoolers were only operating toy guns). It would still remain of interest that watching a particular type of television program could promote either or both of 'real' aggression and 'playful' aggression, but it might influence our models of the role of media influences upon aggressive behaviour if we were able to distinguish among these. The Sanson et al. study provides a timely push towards such work as well as a valuable guide to design and measurement issues.

Computer games

There has been considerable interest in Australia and New Zealand in the uses of new media, especially computer games, by young people. In Australia, computer games are classified by the Office of Film and Literature Classification following guidelines similar to those employed in the classification of films, with the difference that material which would receive an 'R' in the movies (Restricted to persons over the age of 18) is refused classification in computer games (see Bedford, 1995, for a discussion of adults' rights in this context).

Durkin (1995a) undertook a commissioned review of the available (international) literature investigating the place of computer games in the lives of contemporary children and adolescents, considering both negative effects (such as 'addiction', learning or encouragement of aggressive behaviour, impairment of family life and school performance, health consequences) and positive effects (such as cognitive and perceptuo-motor skill enhancement, heightened peer interaction, development of familiarity with computers).

Durkin concluded that the research did not justify assumptions of widespread ill effects. Incidence of obsessive involvement in computer game play is low in most surveys of children's leisure time use, and there is little evidence of deleterious consequences for social life or educational progress. On the topic of aggression, Durkin stressed that there were only a small number of studies published (in contrast to the large literature on television and aggression), and that these had yielded weak or inconsistent findings. Some studies pointed to an association between *arcade* play and aggressiveness, but not between home play and aggressiveness; surprisingly little success had been obtained in experimental studies attempting to find greater aggressiveness following laboratory exposure to violent games. However, Durkin noted that most of this literature was reporting work conducted in America and Britain in the 1980s, and it remains possible that the picture could change in the light of new research and in response to changes in the games themselves (such as greater realism and higher levels of violence). He suggested also that there is a need for research appropriate to the Australian cultural context (for example, Australia scores lower on most indices of real-life violence than the US and this may interact with any influence due to game content).

This report resulted in some debate in the national media. Some commentators have interpreted the literature differently from Durkin, and argued that 'We have no proof of no harm from video games, and we have some proof of harm' (Biggins, 1995, p. 85). Biggins argues that where researchers have failed to find proof of harm, it may be because of general deficiencies in social science research, or of sloppy methodology. Biggins holds also that the parental community is 'ill-equipped to guide and take responsibility for children's access to video games' (p. 89) and therefore favours conservative classification of this medium. Biggins makes the general point that the information superhighway could helpfully be flagged: 'Proceed with caution – children crossing.'

Most parties to this debate tend to agree that the amount of research available is limited. Since the Durkin (1995a) report, some new Australian research has been completed. Ask, Winefield, and Augostinos (1997) drew on competition-aggression theory to argue that violent video games can elicit aggressive behaviours because of their competitive themes. Essentially, the thesis is that when placed in a competitive situation, people are prone to become angry, hostile and aggressive. The authors propose also, along lines similar to Huesmann and Sanson et al., above, that people may develop from earlier experiences schemas in which competitive environments become associated with particular cognitions, most notably hostile and aggressive patterns of thought. In a preliminary test with high school students, Ask et al. found that children do perceive competitive situations as more aggressive than cooperative situations. The investigators then conducted an experiment with other male and female adolescents in which participants played a video game in pairs, such that some individuals were competing against their partner, and others were cooperating with their partner. The hypothesis was that participants in the more competitive situation should demonstrate more aggressive responses, which were defined here as the proportion of 'kills' of adversaries on screen (computed as the ratio of kills over kills + avoidance responses). Earlier American research by Anderson and Morrow (1995), with college students as participants, had obtained such an effect, though Ask et al. (1997) saw that study as confounded because the participants gained points for 'killing'.

In the Ask et al. (1997) study, the participants were not rewarded with points for killing. The participants' mean kill ratios were virtually identical in the competitive and cooperative situations (.67 and .66, respectively). The researchers also solicited participants' evaluations of their partners, to test the hypothesis that competing against someone was more likely to evoke hostile reactions than cooperating with someone. No difference was obtained. Although these findings might be taken as contradicting the competition-aggression account, Ask et al. note that their participants reported enjoying the game played (*Donkey Kong*), found it easy and not very frustrating. Hence, the game – if it is perceived as 'fun' rather than 'battle' – may not provide an optimal test of the theory. Certainly, it does indicate that aggressive responses are not an inevitable consequence of playing competitive video games.

Ask (1996) reports a variant of the experiment using a more ostensibly aggressive game (*Mortal Kombat III*), with male high school students as participants (their female peers did not want to play). In this study, participants played initially in a series of trials and then, a week later, took part in a knock-out 'tournament' with financial prizes at stake. The game allows the possibility of aggressive types of moves and nonviolent moves. During the trials, the winners tended to use more violent moves and during the tournament, aggressive moves increased. Ask concludes that participants 'had an inclination to produce violent moves when there was more competition'. He cautions, however, against oversimplistic interpretations that this demonstrates an effect of video games on social behaviour, and points out that the experiment does not test transfer effects (i.e., learning about the efficacy of violence in a game context which is then transferred to 'real life' contexts). His current research is addressed to this issue.

In sum, interest in the effects of violent media content remains an active research area. Studies of children reacting to television and adolescents playing with computer games yield complex but provocative findings. Much remains to be settled about causal relations and about the meaning of aggression in these contexts, but recent studies underline the need for continuing investigation and point to new methodological developments and refinements that could usefully be exploited by other researchers.

Children's perspectives and experiences

A large proportion of recent Australian research has been concerned with aspects of children's experiences of the media, their patterns of use and preferences, their reactions to and their interpretations of media content. This work ranges through the very earliest experiences of television viewing through to the perceptions of school students.

Infants and toddlers

Collaboration between the coordinators of a large scale longitudinal study of emotional development in early childhood (Brent Waters, Judy Ungerer and Bryanne Barnett) and researchers at the Australian Broadcasting Authority (Margaret Cupitt and Daniel Jenkinson) is providing rare data on the television experiences of infants. Although it is well established that contemporary children spend time in the environment of television sets and VCRs from the beginnings of life, research into early responses to these media has been relatively scarce. In this study (Cupitt, Jenkinson, Ungerer, & Waters, 1997), data were collected from 157 parents (primarily mothers) when their child was aged 4 months, 12 months and 30 months. The sample included participants from a wide range of backgrounds, initially recruited when the mothers were attending obstetric clinics in central Sydney. Using interviews, viewing diaries and questionnaires, the investigators sought information about the amount, intensity and social contexts of early television viewing, the kinds of programs to which children were exposed and their reactions to them, and parental concerns and mediation strategies.

Infants in this study were viewing on average 5 hours per week of TV at 4 months, increasing to almost 10 hours at 30 months (with considerable individual variation). According to the mothers' perceptions, the intensity (manifest concentration) of children's viewing increased over this age span. The peak viewing times for 4- to 30-month-olds were 6-9 a.m. and 6-9 p.m. Children viewed a wide range of program types, including children's programs but also news, sports, and drama content. Children's programs increased as a proportion of total viewing during the age span, though even at 30 months these constituted less than half (45%) of the children's viewing. Viewing intensity was highest for these programs, though intermediate levels of perceived interest were reported for news, light entertainment and drama.

80% of mothers reported that their children imitated things seen on television, and 18% said theirs did not. 55% of children were reported to have imitated games, activities or scenes, 47% imitated dances, mimes, actions or movements and 45% imitated music, rhymes, songs or noises. In contrast, only 13% were reported to imitate aggressive behaviour.

The meaning of this finding is open to debate and warrants further research. The characteristics and severity of the behaviours and the intentions of the children were not recorded. It is possible that mothers over-interpret rough-and-tumble play, which would be becoming increasingly prevalent in children entering the toddler stage (Durkin, 1995b). On the other hand, it is also possible that mothers were oblivious to some ramifications of viewing aggressive material: for example, if delayed imitation occurred, perhaps when the child was less closely supervised, it might be harder for lay observers to relate this to television experiences. It is also possible that imitation rates are lower in very young samples, who lack the motor skills to enact some of the behaviours seen on television.

A subset of the sample (37 mothers) was asked what they thought their child (at 30 months) had learned from television. Most reported positive learning, such as vocabulary, counting skills, music, but one quarter reported that television had made their child more aggressive. Again, this is a potentially important finding, but one which should be interpreted with caution. How do the mothers determine causality (a task which has challenged many of the world's leading social scientists for decades)? Are they accurate, or do they under- or over-estimate the effects of television in this regard? How can we disentangle the developmentally increasing capacity of the toddler for robust and aggressive behaviours from his or her accumulating television viewing experience? What is distinctive about the one quarter of children (or families) where aggressive learning is reported? What do parents do when they discern influences of this kind? This ongoing study raises many fascinating questions and provides findings collected in a broader social-developmental context than is typically accessible to media researchers.

Kindergarten and school age children

Turning to older children, several different research groups have reported findings based on children's own accounts of their media (usually, but not only, television experiences). The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) has conducted extensive research into children's opinions about television content (Sheldon, Ramsay, & Loncar, 1994; Sheldon & Loncar, 1995, 1996). Sheldon et al. (1994) report the findings from qualitative and quantitative studies investigating 9- to 12-year-old children's attitudes to violence, kissing and swearing on television. Over 100 children participated in preliminary focus groups, and over 1,600 took part in a survey.

It is often asserted in public debate that audiences, including the young, have become inured to violence in the media as a result of the sheer proliferation of aggressive content. Sheldon et al.'s (1994) study indicates that the true picture is more complex. For example, about half of their sample certainly professed liking programs that were 'action packed' with fights, guns and car chases. On the other hand, nearly two thirds said that they did not like to watch programs that show children being hurt or 'whacked'. Almost as many disliked programs which showed animals being hurt or parents arguing and fighting. When asked in the survey whether they had ever viewed anything which had upset or bothered them, 50% of children spontaneously listed incidents involving violence (contrasting with mentions of nudity and swearing, which appeared in only 8% and 2% of responses, respectively). Independent research by Cupit (1997) yields compatible findings. He asked 1,500 South Australian upper primary children to identify scenes that they had witnessed on videos that left them with unwelcome memories. Approximately 25% of children spontaneously mentioned themes related to violence.

Durkin (1990) summarises an interview study of Australian kindergarten children's reactions to the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, an imported American series that inspired seemingly universal enthusiasm among young viewers and corresponding alarm among parents and educators. At the time, there were many allegations in the Australian media that young children could not differentiate fact from fantasy in TV, and reports that children nationwide were slavishly emulating the Turtles' martial arts practices. In fact, Durkin's interviewees proved well aware that the Turtles were not real and elaborated that their aggressive play was not for real, either. Similar findings are reported by Sheldon and Ramsay (1996) in a more extensive series of interviews about, among other topics, the Turtles' successors, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*. Interview studies can provide insights into children's perceptions and reasoning, but of course are limited as tests of the social consequences of viewing a particular type of material (often, this is not their primary focus). It is certainly possible that children react to aggressive media in ways which they do not recognise consciously or cannot articulate. The commercial effectiveness of the *Turtles* and *Power Rangers* enterprises could hardly be refuted, and others have argued, partly on the basis of clinical observations, that we need to monitor the subtle incorporation of aggressive cartoon heroes' values and problem solving techniques along with their T-shirts, pencils, cups and other accompanying products (Young, 1990). Sanson et al.'s (1993) investigation of the interaction of program content and associated toy play are also of obvious relevance in this connection.

Tulloch and Tulloch (1992a, 1992b; Tulloch, 1995) have conducted several studies designed to investigate whether young viewers interpret all forms of violence in the same way, and whether tolerance levels vary with genre and social institution. In one study, they tested the responses of 1,277 Sydney school students, in Years 4, 7 and 10 to four twenty minute episodes of aggressive television content. Their stimuli included a portrayal of domestic violence in a popular soap opera, documentary footage of police violence, a compilation of scenes of sports violence, and a war drama (Tulloch & Tulloch, 1992a). Students' responses were collected in questionnaire-type judgments of the rights and wrongs of the behaviours presented and evaluations of alternative solutions, as well as in essays on 'what the program was about'. The findings are complex, involving interactions among age, social class and gender, and varying across the programs. However, one of the most important outcomes was that the children did reason very differently about violence in different contexts. For example, almost all responded that domestic violence was intolerable, not 'natural' and that something could be done about it, whereas many felt that violence on the sports field 'just happens' and 'no-one can stop it really'. The authors argue (1992b) that children treat domestic violence as shown in television as a serious issue and have strong feelings about it; television may have a role to play in raising awareness of this social problem.

These studies open up interesting methodological possibilities for researchers investigating young people and media violence, and raise important questions about the role of perceived reality in learning from television. We know from other Australian research that children often report that they do not like watching the news, in part because it is 'boring' but also because it contains realistic accounts of horrific, violent and frightening events (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, 1990; Palmer, 1986; Sheldon & Loncar, 1996).

Low and Durkin (1997a) have investigated developmental and representational processes in young viewers' interpretations of a TV genre that is often associated with antisocial and aggressive content: police programs. Police and crime-related dramas are popular among young Australian viewers (Sheldon et al., 1994) as they are in other countries (Huston et al., 1992), but they are well known to offer a distorted account of crime and police work, as well as other cognitive challenges to the young viewer (Durkin, 1992; Durkin & Howarth, 1997). Low and Durkin invited children and young adults to relate what happens in a police program. In this way, it is possible to examine whether children have themselves acquired scripts (cognitive schemas, about the typical sequence of events for crime consistent with elements of popular television. For example might children learn that, 'If you need some money, you could steal it from a bank' or that 'You beat people up when you want something'. In fact, no evidence emerged of these kinds of scripts in any age group. However, even the youngest children did have structured, script-like knowledge of what happens in police shows. All participants regarded the commission of a crime as integral, but most also knew about the course of events thereafter: for example, even the younger children believed that arrests/imprisonment follow crimes, and older children knew more about intermediate processes (such as investigations, chases, and other legal activities). In another study (Low and Durkin, in press), even relatively young children demonstrated not only an awareness of the intent of criminals but also some appreciation of how members of the public (e.g., witnesses) and legal institutions (such as the courts) play a role in the administration of justice. One implication of these findings is that, at least with respect to the crime genre, children do not select isolated bits of actions or scenes (aggressive or otherwise) but organise their understanding of the programs around a series of sequentially connected events.

If children do develop scripts for crime programs, are these reflected in their understanding of real life crime and police work? In another study, Low and Durkin (1997b) asked children aged 6 to 12 to estimate how often police engaged in activities that are shown frequently in television (high speed pursuits, aggressive arrests) and activities that are shown infrequently in television (routine patrols, handling order maintenance cases). Half of the children were asked to estimate how often these activities were undertaken by real life police, and half were asked how often they were taken by television police. Children in the television condition demonstrated reasonably accurate awareness of which activities police shows depict frequently or infrequently. However, children in the real life condition tended to overestimate the frequency of some activities, and to underestimate the frequency of others – and these inaccuracies fell in the directions predicted by television content. Among the activities that were seen as very frequent in police work were aggressive behaviours such as dramatic chases and rough searches. In other words, these young viewers appear to be constructing their social understandings with reference to their most readily available source of information: television. One important qualification, though, was that children were less influenced by television when it came to estimating the frequency of police activities that they have opportunities to observe directly (such as routine patrols).

In sum, there is a growing interest in children's own accounts and interpretations of what they experience in the media. Various methodologies are used, ranging through interviews, script generation tasks, and experiments. If a common thread can be discerned it is the recognition that children's media use is not a unidirectional phenomenon but an interactive process influenced by cognitive and linguistic development and social context.

Parental mediation

A prominent aspect of the social context, of course, is the family. Another major theme of recent work has been the ways in which parents become involved in children's media use. Researchers have become increasingly interested in parental mediation partly in response to theoretical developments within media research (Huston & Wright, 1994) and developmental psychology (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Sigel, McGillicudy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992) and partly in response to political and sociocultural realities: the recognition that, whatever the legislative climate, primary responsibility for children's media use will fall to their caregivers.

The Sydney infancy study reports that most of children's early viewing occurred in the presence of a parent, and this was especially likely in the case of news, current affairs, sport, light entertainment and drama programs (Cupitt et al., 1997). In effect, the parents' own viewing habits were the primary determinants of children's exposure to television content, though during the age span studied children became slightly more autonomous in electing for children's programs when they were available.

Cupitt et al. (1997) found that mothers were ambivalent about the effects of television, perceiving positive consequences (such as broadening experiences and educational gains) but also negative or harmful influences. In open-ended responses, concerns about violent/war content were expressed by 59% of mothers. This figure was higher than those for sex (25%), news and current affairs (22%) and cartoons (21%). Mothers were concerned that violent models could encourage the acceptance of aggression and other undesirable values.

Very similar figures are reported by Skoien and Berthelson (1997) in a study of parental attitudes towards video game play. Most respondents (94%) indicated that they perceived educational value in the games, but almost as many (87%) perceived the games as displacing other activities and almost all (98%) regarded the games as having the potential to encourage negative gender role stereotypes, aggressive behaviour and addiction.

Several researchers have addressed issues relating to parental regulation. Sheldon et al. (1994) found that almost all (98%) of parents of young children claimed to have rules restricting their children's viewing of television in some way. Nearly half (48%) claimed to regulate viewing of programs containing violence. 89% of parents in the Australian Broadcasting Authority's (1994) survey of attitudes towards R-rated material on Pay TV indicated that they used one or more methods of intervention to influence their children's television viewing, and only 7% indicated that their children were able to select their own programs without any parental guidance. Skoien and Berthelson (1997) report that about 85% of the parents in their study indicate that they have acted to restrict their children's computer game play at least occasionally (we turn to their strategies below).

A major study initiated jointly by the ABA and the OFLC has investigated a wide range of issues concerning the uses of electronic entertainment in Australian family homes (Cupitt & Stockbridge, 1996). Parents and their 8- to 17-year-old children participated. The project had a qualitative phase (involving about 80 parents) and a quantitative, survey-based, phase (involving over 700 families). Parental concerns about media uses and their strategies for regulating electronic entertainment in the home were addressed, as well as the relative patterns of use of different media by the children. The report provides a wealth of additional findings on the reasons for rules governing uses of electronic media, the respective perceptions of children and parents about the rules, the relationship of media use to family routines and parental work, and young people's game preferences.

The data provide a clear reminder of the importance of viewing parental attitudes to the media in a broader context. Parents were given 15 different possible factors that might impact upon a child's life and asked to identify (giving their first, second and third choices) those items that most concerned them in relation to their own child's well-being. At the top of their list came 'Education' (35%), followed by 'Personal safety and security' (25%), 'Quality of life' (13%), 'Drugs' (12%), and then 'Electronic entertainment' (6%). The rating for electronic entertainment (which included arcade games, CDs and cassettes, cinema, computers, computer/video games, telephones, radio, television and video) was marginally greater than 'Employment' (4%) and 'Natural environment' (3%).

A majority of the parents had rules about when TV could be watched (82%) and when computer games could be played (75%). Fewer parents had rules about the *content* of games (56%). In general, parents were less concerned about the content of games than the content of television. One of the major reasons was that games were seen as less realistic. Interestingly, violent, combat-style games ranked relatively low in appeal compared to platform games.

Parental strategies to influence their children's television viewing include rules about times for viewing (reported by 50% of parents), set bed times (48%), monitoring programs (40%), and discussions about suitability of programs (31%; respondents could provide more than one response). 31% of parents said that they used the classification system or TV guide to choose appropriate programs. Note that the classification system operates by default when viewing hours are restricted, as programs classified Adults Only are allowed only after 8.30 p.m. Paterson & Hellmers (1993) found that very few parents report that their children view TV alone after 8.30, and these tended to be older children. When the classification systems for all three media (television, films and videos) were considered, over 70% of parents used classification information at least some of the time.

The strategies parents employed to restrict video game play were solicited by Skoien and Berthelson (1997). 35% of parents used direct or coercive strategies (such as prohibiting play or intervening to turn the computer off, 23% suggested or encouraged alternatives, and 42% used rules and regulations (such as designating specific times for play, allowing play only after educational or household work is completed). These researchers also investigated parental guidance styles, adapting instruments devised originally in the study of families and television (Bybee, Robinson, & Turow, 1992; Van der Voort, Nikken, & van Lil, 1992). Their results indicate that parental beliefs about video games predict the kinds of guidance used: for example, parents who saw educational value in the games tended to favour unfocused guidance, while parents concerned about content used evaluative guidance, and parents concerned about displacement emphasized restrictive guidance. Future research could usefully investigate the consequences of parental intervention, and of parental default.

These claimed levels of parental regulation might be open to the challenge that surveys will tend to elicit socially desirable responses: parents may not be willing to disclose that they allow their children to access unsuitable programs or computer games. However, Cupitt and Stockbridge (1996) collected reports on family regulations from both parents and their children independently, and then examined the extent to which they were congruent. In the majority of cases, the parents and children gave consistent responses. When there were disagreements, there was a tendency for parents to claim there were rules and children to claim there were not – though this varied across media. Most parents will probably agree that there are intergenerational differences of opinion about the status of domestic rules and regulations! But, overall, the children's responses tended to validate their parents' accounts.

In sum, Australian findings from several different large scale studies indicate that the majority of parents are involved in children's media use. Parents monitor what children watch and, to a lesser extent, what they play on their computers. They set rules about amounts and schedules. Sometimes, they intervene to divert children from particular types of content and to encourage them towards others. Parents convey their own attitudes about the media, and about the behaviours displayed or provoked, by direct and indirect means. It remains the case that we know little about the processes or the consequences for children's appraisals of their media.

Related topics

Finally, we mention briefly two topics of current concern to researchers and policymakers in Australia and New Zealand that overlap with concerns elsewhere in the world and are certainly very pertinent to the rights of the child: the treatment of indigenous peoples in the media, and the topic of sexual abuse. Although these issues are of obvious importance, research is presently in a very preliminary phase. However, it does have the potential to broaden our understanding of the relationships among aggression in society and children's experiences of the mass media.

There is growing concern about the presentation of minority groups in Australian media, most notably Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people tend to be both underrepresented and misrepresented. They appear infrequently in many areas of television, for example, but when they do they are often associated with antisocial behaviour, drunkenness, violence and civil disturbances and race riots (Bell, 1993; Bostock, 1993; Cuneen, 1994; Goodall, 1993; Nugent, Loncar, & Aisbett, 1993). Aggression in this context, then, is manifest in the media's contributions to the cultural marginalization of a minority group, in the stereotyping of ethnic groups as aggressive and problematic, and in the possible encouragement in the larger community of racist attitudes and aggressive behaviour towards people of indigenous background (Cahill & Ewen, 1992). The representation of Maori people in New Zealand's media is associated with some similar concerns, though the more complex history of colonial relations in that country has given rise to a correspondingly more ambivalent (occasionally very idealised) pattern of representation (Blythe, 1994).

Unfortunately, relatively little is known about the reactions of young (or other) viewers to these aspects of content. However, Sheldon and Loncar (1996), in interviews with 117 Australian children, found that elementary school children were aware of the scarcity of Aboriginal people in television, and were particularly positive about a show dealing with issues of racism if they themselves had experience relating to this problem. Much remains to be investigated concerning the impact of inequitable and negative racial images, and the potential for positive images.

Our final current issue derives from analyses of the ways in which the Australian and New Zealand media treat the problems of child sexual abuse and domestic violence (Atmore, 1996, in press a, b). Atmore discusses how the media contribute to heightened awareness of child abuse, and develops a feminist perspective on the nature of 'moral panics' and the interweaving of journalistic and ideological purposes. Given the likely durability of this topic, important questions arise concerning the impact upon children's perceptions of their personal safety and adult behaviour, though as yet relatively little empirical research appears to have been addressed to these matters.

In sum, we suggest that these are two topics that are very pertinent if we wish to understand the interrelations among aggressiveness, media and young people. With respect to the first, the unique histories and multicultural compositions of each country mean that Australia and New Zealand have particularly important responsibilities in respect of Article 17 of the UN convention that states should 'encourage the mass media ... to have particular regard to children from indigenous and minority groups'. With respect to the second, the ubiquitous occurrence of sexual abuse, and of media sensationalism of the problem, prompts many questions for media researchers – as well as formidable conceptual and logistical challenges that we have yet to address.

Conclusions

Research is being addressed to a wide range of issues related to aggression and young people's media in Australia and New Zealand. Community concerns have been investigated extensively, and diverse approaches have been taken to investigate the possible consequences of viewing or playing with aggressive media content. It is probably fair to say that the balance of current research attention is directed towards the perceptions, experiences and understanding of young viewers themselves and the priorities and mediating strategies of parents. Research developments have reflected developments in the electronic media, though traditional media such as television remain of focal interest, too. It has been suggested here that among many prospects for future directions greater attention to issues that certainly involve aggressiveness (such as ethnic representation, crime, sexual abuse), but which have been hitherto relatively neglected by researchers in this field, could prompt us to diversify our investigations and our methods, ultimately contributing towards a fuller understanding of the relationships among young viewers, their families, their media and the larger society.

Note

1. G = General (suitable for all ages), PGR = Parental Guidance Recommended (parental guidance recommended for persons under 15), M = Mature (recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over), R = 18 + Restricted (restricted to adults 18 years and over).

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Fighting Against Television Violence

An Israeli Case Study

DAFNA LEMISH

On May 1st, 1994, an article under the title "Dozens of Children were Hurt in WWF Style Fights" appeared in the Israeli's major daily newspaper *Yediot Acharonot:*

> "Hocked" on the wrestling television series WWF, dozens of children from the north were hurt when they tried to imitate their idols with friends. Parents living in Nahariya claim that as a result of intensified viewing of the television series – in which all the exercises are staged – many children in the town became "addicted" to performing the exercises in reality.
>
> Dozens of children in the north have broken hands or legs during WWF style fights. A 10 year old boy told *Yediot Acharonot:* "We were practicing and one of the boys broke his leg. I accidentally broke a girl's arm. Those were just from a few blows. But I have been expelled from school three times because of these kinds of accidents." Yesterday, after performing a back-throw and head turning exercise, a 15 year old boy in Nahariya lost consciousness. Luckily, he woke up after a few minutes.
>
> As a result of the intensification of these accidents, the citizens of Nahariya are demanding a restriction on broadcasting of the wrestling series. Ilana, one of the children's mother: "The blows exchanged at school have become routine. Dozens of children are being sent home after wrestling. It all starts as 'pretend' and ends 'for real' ".

This and similar news items in the winter of 1994 exposed the Israeli public to a phenomenon which concerned staffs of many elementary schools at the time: Violent behavior associated with an American wrestling series on television. The Chair of the Education Committee of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) organized a special meeting on the phenomenon with Knesset members, educators, television-industry representatives and academic experts. The effect of television violence was a headline for a day.

The purpose of this article is to document this particular case study as an illustration of the potential of an integrated struggle against the effects of television violence on children by the education system, the public, the regulators, the broadcasters and the academia. The case study begins with background about the development of Israeli television, the context in which media literacy curricula have developed, and the current state of the concern over broadcasting violence on television. This is followed by a description of the particular case study in question – the nature of the program, the findings of the research project and strategies advanced in fighting back the negative effects.

Television as a national force

Concern for the possible contribution of television violence to general societal violence has not attracted much attention in Israeli society in the past. A rare exception is Bachrach's study of the differential effects television violence had on Israeli children raised in two very different environments – a city and a kibbutz (Bachrach, 1986; Huesmann & Bachrach, 1988). Part of the cross-national research project directed by Huesmann and Eron (1986), Bachrach found significant correlations between viewing television violence and peer-rated aggression for the urban children, but not for the kibbutz children who at the time, were being socialized in a unique environment.

The absence of interest in television effects may be explained by the unique historical context in which television has developed in Israel. This country is currently undergoing a major communication revolution – from a single public non-commercial television channel established in 1967 to a mixed, American-style system in which commercial and public channels compete for audiences.

The delay in the commercialization of Israeli television is the result of a four-decade debate about the potential influence of television on the development of Israeli society in general, and that of the American-style commercial format, in particular. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Israel's renowned Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and his supporters argued that American style television, with its capitalistic value system and foreign cultural attributes, would have a strong negative influence on important national efforts to recreate and nourish the development of a unique Jewish Israeli culture. After the 1967 war, new ideological and political concerns led to the decision to include television in the public broadcasting system. Among the primary reasons for this action was the claim that through television Israel could communicate to her hostile neighbors and residents of the Occupied Territories. Indeed, it was hoped that the broadcast media could advance dialogue between the two peoples (Katz, Haas & Gurevitch, 1997; Lemish & Lemish, 1997).

Television then, has been presumed to play a role in the nation's development. For example, given Israel's continuous security situation, the media has emphasised coverage of news and public affairs. In analyzing data on Israeli leisure, culture, and communication during the first 20 years of monopolistic Israeli television, Katz, Haas and Gurevitch (1997) concluded that television supported the norm of collectivism in the sense of "shared and simultaneous pursuits, governed by norms of self-sacrifice and mutual obligation, performed in the knowledge that everybody else is similarly occupied" (p.19). For example, watching the 9 o'clock evening news magazine on the only existing television channel has become "a sort of civic ritual during which the society communed itself" (Katz, Haas & Gurevitch, 1997, p.6).

The limited number of viewing hours during the first two decades of Israeli's television and society's general positive attitude toward television's role in national integration may explain the lack of debate over effects of television on children in general and on children's violence in particular. For example, in a survey of parents of 2-11 year old children, Levinson and Tidhar (1993) found that 77 percent of parents evaluated educational television's impact on their children as positive, and only 3 percent as negative; in comparison to 46 percent and 16 percent with regards to cable television. So while cable which was just being introduced, was clearly perceived as less positive than educational television, it was still evaluated positively by half of the parents.

Concern over the role television plays in Israel's life has developed in exactly those areas of its strength – in its involvement with politics, in its role in national development, and in the development of cultural identity. Out of this public debate emerged in the late 80s and beginning of the 90s what appeared to be a national consensus calling for institutionalization of media literacy programs in schools.

Television literacy in Israel

In the last decade, as Israeli society was gradually experiencing the major changes in the media environment, three national media literacy curricula have been adopted by the Ministry of Education: a television literacy curriculum for the elementary school system, a television and film literacy curriculum for the middle school system, and a mass media curriculum for the upper division school system. Simultaneously, teacher training programs have been developing general and specialization courses in media teaching and production, publishers have been preparing textbooks, and thousands of students at all levels of the school system have begun formal study of the media. Parallel to this trend, most major universities in Israel established formal programs for the academic study of mass communication.

Achieving such a unified national interest is very unusual in a country whose public life is characterized by deep divisions and disagreements over most significant political and policy issues. Analysis of how this consensus was achieved reveals that alliances developed among persons whose political and ideological views usually find them disagreeing on almost every other issue. "Media literacy" was perceived as a desirable educational goal by persons with very different points of view representing completely different ideologies. For some, it was aimed at developing tools for preventing the Americanization of Israel. For others, it was perceived as a means for educating future citizens against political manipulation. Unusual coalitions of interests were formed around ethical issues – portrayals of women and children, pornography. Finally, many were concerned with television's unique surveillance role in Israeli society in regards to dependency on current affairs information and interpretation, and the potential empowerment of citizens.

The result of these various efforts was that media literacy was offered as a cure – or as a conscience comforter – for every social ill. While there seemed to be a broad agreement on basic principles of media education – such as the understanding that media messages are constructed and that they are socially-politically-culturally contextualized – the agendas of different educational enclaves of Israeli society led to development of their own variation of media education programs.

This resulted in a situation in which actions in the field are driving media literacy in different directions and that implementation is at the mercy of persons in positions of power who advance a variety of curricula based upon their own ideological interpretations and interests (for a complete discussion see Lemish & Lemish, 1997).

The changing television scene

Since its introduction at the beginning of the 90s, cable television in Israel has been expanding very rapidly. Approximately 60 percent of Israeli homes subscribe to cable (70 percent in the densely populated Tel-Aviv metropolitan area) and there are indications the number is continuing to grow. In addition, in mid 1993, the Second Television Channel was permitted to expand its schedule and to experiment with commercials. These major changes have dramatically increased the amount of viewing hours available to Israeli viewers, number of viewing options offered to them, as well as the growing dependency on the international television market, mainly, of American fare (Nossek & Tidhar, 1994; Weimann, 1995; 1996).

Thus, the public discourse discussed above may be changing as Israeli culture moves away from collectivism towards individualism, as manifested by consumerism, along with a decrease of consumption of high culture and an increase of popular media and the like (Katz, Haas & Gurevitch, 1997). Possible support for this thesis comes from Weimann's (1995;1996) study of the introduction of cable to Israeli society. Weimann found in his sample of 180 households significant changes in consumption of television, in the social context of viewing television, and in feelings and attitudes towards the medium. For example, increased viewing time was accompanied by uneasiness and even guilt feelings (as expressed in agreeing to statements such as: "watching TV is often a waste of time"; "I often watch TV more than I intend to"). In addition, Weimann found an increase in worries expressed about children's viewing and attempts to control viewing which often resulted in conflicts.

The awakening of interest over television's impact on children reached its peak in January 1994, following the brutal murder of a taxi driver by two middle class teenagers. The media's role in encouraging and contributing to legitimization of violence was debated in the daily papers and in the broadcast media. It was under these special circumstances – the recent dramatic growth of television options and the shock of a senseless murder that this first major public debate over television and violence took place – over the case of WWF.

WWF – The television series

The World Wrestling Federation (WWF) programs present wrestling matches performed in an arena in front of live audiences. Operating under the guise of a sport, WWF is in fact a booming entertainment industry and a unique cultural phenomenon. This form of wrestling is distinctly different from other televised sporting events: it appears that there are no clear rules or agreed upon code of behaviors. Almost every form of violent act seems to be allowed and possible until the brutal defeat of the opponent.

In fact, the WWF is a form of sport-parody: The rules of the game are there to be broken, the referee exists so he can be ignored (Fiske, 1987). While in other forms of sport the opponents have an equal chance at the competition, the differences between WWF opponents are emphasized from the start: "good guys" and "bad guys" are identifiable to viewers through their names, costumes and appearance, the gadgets they use, their reactions to the audience, their body language and facial expressions and the like. The "good guys" are often handsome Caucasians promoted in Euro-American culture as images of the Good and Powerful. On the other hand, the "bad guys" are often dark skinned, physically grotesque, ridiculously dressed and non Euro-American in appearances. These wrestlers purposefully break the rules, ignore the referee, cheat on their own partners and evoke feelings of meanness in the excited audience.

The 1994 case study

WWF was broadcast in Israel on various channels during different days and hours of the week. Due to the growing public concern, a focused field study of the effects of this particular violent program on children was launched in the Spring of 1994.[1] The major goal of the study was to examine the role WWF played in the lives of elementary school children. More specifically, this case study was undertaken in order to study the more general phenomenon of the effects of television violence as they are filtered through a host of mediating variables within specific contexts (for a full discussion of this project, see Lemish, 1997).

The study developed through three phases and included quantitative and qualitative measures:

(1) Survey of 285 questionnaires completed by principals of elementary schools.

(2) In-depth unstructured phone interviews with 75 elementary school principals.

(3) Visits to nine schools representing different profiles of Israeli society. 901 questionnaires were completed by children in grades 3 through 6 in these schools. In addition, 254 open-ended interviews were conducted with children of those classes who volunteered to be interviewed.

Behavioral effects

The findings of the three stages suggest unequivocally that WWF wrestling was a distinct and disturbing phenomenon in many Israeli elementary schools during the academic year of 1993-1994. The violence accompanying WWF fights was unique and separable from other forms of school violence. Wrestling was done within a mock-arena, in front of a cheering audience, applying mostly pre-planned agreements, which included character identification and specific fighting tactics. Interviewees were all of the opinion that the phenomenon increased violence in the schools and the rate of injuries to a degree never known before and not repeated since its decline. It was emphasized that the WWF type violence was not just a different version of school violence, but a different entity – qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

These findings support the literature dealing with the contribution of television violence to violent behavior (for recent meta-analyses, see for example Geen, 1994; Gunter, 1994; Paik & Comstock, 1994). Further, the study provided evidence that modeling behavior does indeed take place in a deferred manner under favorable social conditions, and that it is effective even with older children (in this case 8-12 years old) – than those usually examined in experimental studies. These data also illuminate the dilemma of direction of the causality of the violence effect: The more violent children, as identified by peers, were indeed heavier viewers and heavier imitators of WWF. However, children who were identified to be non-violent, including some girls, played violent WWF games as well. In other words, viewing WWF was found to reshape and increase violent behaviors first and foremost among children labeled as violent but also among some of the non-violent children.

One possible interpretation for why this may be true for some non-violent children and not for others, emerged through children's discussion of their confusion over the fantasy and reality aspects of the series. Such blurring has been related in the literature as facilitating imitative behavior. For example, in a meta-analysis of studies of television violence, Hearold (1986) concluded that perception of realism was an important factor in the relationship between viewing violence and behaving aggressively. Van der Voort (1986) found that the more realistic children found a television episode to be, the more they watched, were involved, took it seriously, perceived it as violent and judged it to be more exciting. Van Evra (1990) suggested that younger children are particularly vulnerable to these effects due to their difficulties in making the necessary distinctions between fantasy and reality.

Gender differences

The gendered role of WWF in children's lives emerged as a central theme as the study unfolded. Opposition to WWF served to reinforce their gender identity for most girls. For them, WWF, as other sporting events, legitimized the masculine world view of "the toughest guy wins". The emphasis the girls' discourse put on the violent aspects of the program, and more specifically, on the violent nature of males, support Byrson's (1978) view of televised sport as a form of male monopolization of physical force.

Watching and imitating WWF was perceived as part of boys' "nature" and normative behavior. As the literature suggests, most girls in this study, appreciated violence less, watched it and imitated it less, and were more critical of it, than boys (Van der Voort, 1986; Van Evra, 1990).

For other girls, albeit a minority, WWF provided an opportunity to safely experiment with the adoption of male norms of behavior. These were the ones who shared in the interviews their pleasure in playing WWF fights at home, where the possibility for social as well as physical sanctions was minimized. The home environment allowed them to experiment with their physical as well as psychological abilities to fight, either with younger (thus usually weaker) or with older (thus usually playful) siblings (for an analysis of these findings from a feminist perspective, see Lemish, under review).

Cultivation effects

Children in this study identified the WWF series as representing a foreign ideology and culture. This culture was characterized by an extreme form of "more-ness": "More" in the positive sense – richer, bigger, more developed, more creative, more varied and the like. But, also, "more" as fear and as criticism – more violent, wilder, more dangerous. These perceptions were incorporated in a worldview based on previous encounters with popular media which present the United States as a violent and rich society in a homogenized stereotypical way. In that exciting all-powerful culture called America, violence is a central theme. Regular viewing of WWF seemed to contribute to perpetuating this mythical belief "that one is living in a Mean World" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Since such programs pertain to a realm of experiences otherwise not available to young viewers (most have never been to the United States, for example), their influence may prove to be lasting by presenting selectively limited mental frames for future references (for a full discussion see Lemish, forthcoming).

The educational system fighting back

As WWF-related injuries increased (principals' reports estimated at least 150 physical injuries requiring professional medical care, an additional 400 injuries which required first aid within the school and countless injuries which did not require any medical attention), and newspaper exposure mounted, schools were forced to take action. Most of the principals interviewed reported how they engaged in a process which required drafting all the resources available – pedagogical and others – in order to directly confront the WWF phenomenon. Two general strategies were adopted – short and long term treatments:

(1) Short term treatments: putting out the fire

Short term treatments often resulted from the shock and unexpected distress following a dangerous injury on school grounds. Immediate reaction was called for and it was taken on four levels – individual, class, school and parental.

Individual level:
Principals adopted a strict and unequivocal punishment policy. This included explicit banning of any WWF-related activity (including wrestling, wearing T-shirts advertising WWF, bringing WWF figures to school or playing with WWF game cards). Punishments for disobedience included reprimand by the principal, summoning of parents, a written reprimand in the student's personal file, deprivation of privileges (such as permission to leave the classroom during breaks), prohibition on taking the school bus, special homework, special school chores and even removal from school for several days.

Class level:
Teachers, school councilors, special education teachers and even the principals themselves held special discussions during class hours in an effort to drive home the seriousness of the matter. Children were presented with media reports on the danger involved in WWF-related fights and with evidence from injuries sustained in their own school. Students were encouraged to write letters complaining about WWF broadcasting to newspapers and other media representatives including directors of cable channels; to stage and discuss simulations of WWF fights; to express themselves through creative writing and the like. Special effort was devoted to explain to the children the theatrical nature of the series.

School level:
General assemblies were devoted to discussing the phenomenon of WWF fights and to stating school policy. Teachers' patrols during breaks were intensified and their duties directed to handling the fights. Students' Councils were asked to join in the efforts. Students volunteered for special "fight against WWF" patrols. Joint student and teacher teams re-wrote existing regulations to include items referring directly to such fights. New school institutions were established, such as "Peace Council", "Tolerance Committee", "Non-Violent Trustees" and others. Older students volunteered to tutor younger violent children. Special awards were granted to students who were commended for actions against school violence. Special efforts were devoted to developing "The Active Break": A structured plan of activities during recess time, which included fun and sporting activities, music and dance, and creative arts. All of the above were developed in the hope that these activities would limit the opportunities for WWF-related fights to develop.

Parental level:
Activities included summoning special parents meetings, circulating written materials and establishing Parents Councils to join in the efforts to eliminate the phenomenon.

All in all, all principals emphasized the genuine tremendous educational efforts which were invested in the attempt to fight back against this new, escalating phenomenon.

(2) Long term strategies: a window of opportunity

Long term strategies were characterized by an attempt to incorporate the struggle with WWF related behavior within general educational efforts against other negative phenomena in schools such as violent behavior, deterioration of school discipline, disrespect towards friends, etc. WWF provided a "window of opportunity" for advancing implementation of such plans. In many cases it served as a catalyst for legitimizing prioritization of budgets required to advance educational programs.

The negative consequences of WWF-related activities in schools significantly motivated the interest and willingness of the educational staffs to adopt innovative approaches and curricula, even if out of a feeling of "no choice". Two types of educational programs were implemented:

Media Studies:
These included the spread adoption of the formal national media literacy curriculum for the elementary school and other initiatives, such as analysis of current affairs, study of animation, development of critical viewing skills, production courses and the like. Clearly, WWF served as a legitimate excuse to go ahead with the principals' plans to advance such efforts.

Interpersonal Communication:
These programs included the development of personal skills through various innovative educational programs which emphasize values such as tolerance and mutual respect, development of self-worth, and skills in decision making, mediation, problem solving, among others.

It is important to emphasize, that without exception, principals strongly perceived their efforts to have been productive: All reported that their preventive measures as well as educational efforts resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of fights which took place at school and in many cases in its complete disappearance. The interviews with the children confirmed this observation. Many of them referred voluntarily to the success of the various efforts as responsible for the decline of their own violent behavior, as well as that of others. Many quoted in detail "horror" stories related to injuries and their consequences and seemed to have deeply internalized the expected school policy.

Intervention by the Council of Cable Broadcasts

The Council of Cable Broadcasts is the public statutory body appointed by the government to regulate the performance of cable franchisers. As such, the Council is in charge of developing policy in regards to type of broadcasts, including topics, contents, quality, variety and scale. In addition, it is responsible for future development, including new cable services, specialized channels, utilization of satellite broadcasting and the like.

As the Council's attention was called to the dangers posed by the broadcasting of WWF, the Chairperson decided to take action at various different levels. First, she invited an academic researcher (the author of this article) to inform the Council on research on influences of television violence on children. She also agreed to advance this research project and dedicated finances for its execution. The results of the project were distributed to journalists in the various media as well as to all broadcasting organizations.

Secondly, the Council initiated negotiations with the cable franchisers for the purpose of limiting broadcast hours and for warning young viewers of the possible negative effects of attempting to imitate the program. The result of these efforts was the production of short public broadcast announcement which included a popular young actor explaining to the children that WWF is just a television show and should not be modeled. This announcement was tailored to meet the research findings whose implications included the need to clarify the fictional dimensions of this pretend "sport" series. The announcement was broadcast twice during each airing of WWF on the Sports Channel, as well as on the popular Children and Family channels, as part of a special campaign. Some of the school principals interviewed incorporated references to these broadcasts in their appeal to the students. The students, on their part, quoted the broadcast as a source of information on the fictional nature of the program.

An additional side-effect of this case study was the establishment of an open channel of communication between academic professionals and broadcasters, through the mediating of the regulator. This has already been proven fruitful in a number of cases. One example was the recent discussion initiated about the broadcast of violent promos during children's viewing hours. A Violence-Monitoring Project initiated and sponsored by the Council as a tool for supervising the cable broadcasters located a specific problem in promos for violent movies. While the movies themselves are scheduled for late hour broadcast, their promos are broadcast during all hours of the day and on channels viewed heavily by children of all ages. The content of the promos is illustrative of the core issues concerning the effects of television violence: They often consist of harsh and violent scenes, which are shown as an "incentive" for further viewing. Violence is presented in an attractive yet de-contextualized manner: there are no reasons or motivations for the behavior on one hand, and no consequences on the other. Since there is no story but hyped visuals and sounds, it is impossible to distinguish the "good guys" from the "bad guys"; therefore violence is perceived as normal action for all.

As a result of intensive discussions of the WWF case, the promos as well as examination of various definitions of television violence in various content analyses of research projects (for example, the Mediascope, Inc., 1994-5), the Council reworded the existing regulation and now prohibits the broadcast before the hour of 22:00 of "any broadcast which includes harsh or blunt visual, verbal or audio related expressions of violence, sex or suffering, or broadcasts which are the object of imitation; no promo will be broadcast before the above hour which includes the above content; and no promo to a broadcast of that kind, even if it does not in itself include such content, will be broadcast in the children's channel."

Finally, the Council clarified its policy in regard to handling issues of this nature: An integrative approach which includes focused research, long term educational campaigning for the development of television literacy, and secondary legislation (such as the above limiting broadcast hours for violent content). The Council, a regulator, opposes – as do most academics in this field in Israel – the possibility of formal general legislation which will expropriate the issue from the broadcasters and their regulators. Such legislation, it is argued, is deemed impossible to implement and enforce and it is perceived as posing a severe danger to freedom of expression and the independence of Israeli broadcasting system.

Summary

The case of WWF related fights in the school system in Israel created an unusual opportunity to reconsider the relationships of television violence and the modeling of violent behavior under well defined and focused conditions. The phenomenon appeared suddenly, as the broadcasts on the Sports Cable Channel and on the commercialized Second Israeli channel became popular. The behavior in question was uniquely different from any other school violence and easily identified by interviewees. Participants came from all profiles of Israeli society – urban as well as rural children; middle-class as well as lower class; secular as well as religious populations; from the heavily populated center of the country as well as its peripheral north and south.

In addition, the phenomenon has declined as sharply as it appeared, a year later. Several complementary explanations can be offered for the possible social mechanism involved. First, the Second Channel took the program off the air for various reasons, public pressure included. However, the program continued to be broadcast regularly, several times a week, on the cable channels. Yet, a significant decline in WWF type wrestling was noted even in the schools located in areas served by cable television. Therefore, three other lines of explanation which emerged from the interview data may be proposed: First the effectiveness of the preventive and educational measures taken by the schools, as described above. A second, related explanation is that children came to understand that the program is staged and recognized that many of its elements are unrealistic. In the interviews, many of the children argued that realizing the program is staged reduced their pleasure in viewing it and their inclination to imitate it. Finally, fads and fashions seem to be playing a role here too: At the time, a new activity was gaining popularity during school break (playing and swapping collectable colorful little plastic discs) and gradually replaced WWF fights. During the two years that have passed, these and other activities have come and gone. However, the danger that a new violent television fad will appear and will again popularity like a brush fire as did WWF fights is always there.

Finally, a discussion of violence on Israeli television and children can not be complete without taking into consideration the unique geo-political reality of the Israeli-Arab conflict in which these children are growing up. One result is that children are heavily exposed to documentation of real live violence. In an early study of the effect of the 1973 Yom Kippur War films on children, Cohen & Adoni (1980) found that the movies stimulated fear and emotional arousal in children. The effect was stronger for those children exposed to the war film with a battle sound-track than for those exposed to verbal narration. However, effects were weaker for children who discussed the movies with their parents.

In the last two years, children in Israel have been exposed, while viewing television in their natural home environment and often without mediation, to the most terrifying sights of the consequences of human violence – an assassination, terrorist attacks, bombings, suicide-explosions. The horror of these sights includes mutilated bodies, body parts, blood; the cries of pain and trauma of the injured; the heart breaking sights of the mourning for victims. The debate over the ethical issues involved in live-coverage of disasters has now penetrated both the public and professional arenas, as well as in mass communication theoretical analyses (Liebes, in press). The special threat posed to the well-being of children has yet to be studied. Real violence of this magnitude is framed in the most negative terms, its perpetrators as inhumane, and the results devastating. The possible emotional damage to young viewers is a question well in order: Does viewing of this sort cultivate the "mean world" perspective? Does it incite fear and pessimism? Does it encourage the legitimization of further violence (such as retaliation?) Does it contribute to the value that "might is right"? Do children carry some of these values and perceptions into the viewing of entertainment television, such as the WWF series? Or vice versa, does fictional television violence support such values? From what we know from the existing literature in regards to viewing of less explicit violence (such as the coverage of the Gulf War in 1992), there is good reason to believe that children do not remain untouched by exposure to such television viewing (Buckingham, 1996; Cantor, 1994, 1996; Cantor, Mares & Oliver, 1993; Derdeyn & Turley, 1994; Hoffner & Haefner, 1993; Morrison & MacGregor, 1993; Wober & Young, 1993).

As the WWF case study illustrates, what seems to be called for is a major attempt at joint efforts: An active public that reacts to what it perceives as a threat to the well-being of children, regulators who are quick to respond and demand change from the broadcasters, social-action research to provide the supporting data for taking action, an education system willing and able to explore innovative pedagogics, and broadcasters who accept the social responsibility that goes with their profession. This is a mode of cooperation and social responsibility necessary in order to advance the development of civil society.

Note

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What Do We Know About European Research on Violence in the Media?

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Public concerns on the likely effects of media on children and youth has given rise to considerable research. The first part of this article will describe the state of research about children and young people in Europe and then examine the changing face of research in Scandinavia if not necessarily the debate about violence.

In a recent survey of academic research on children and the media in the fifteen countries which currently are members of the European Union, Linné (1996) demonstrated that in the sample of one hundred and seven universities who answered this questionnaire, fifty-one universities were active in the field of Children and the Media. The countries where research about mass media and children has been most developed in the 1990s are those of north-western Europe, namely the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland (in that rank order).

On the question of how the researchers would evaluate the development of research in their own country, Italy, Spain, Austria, Greece, Luxembourg and Portugal all reported that the state of affairs regarding research was relatively poor. The responses from the UK, Germany, the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Ireland were much more positive. This I believe, has less to do with demographic factors such as size of population, than a combination of social and historical forces.

The questionnaires were filled in by one hundred and seven Departments of Media Studies, Media Policy, Sociology, Journalism, Psychology, Audience Research and Media Education within the European Union. The respondents were professors, directors, researchers and lecturers.

The major approaches used in the research, according to the respondents were firstly sociological, followed by social psychological and then psychological approaches.

Very few mentioned a literary or humanist approach or, indeed, a political-economy approach. However, the surprising result here is not so much that the latter approaches mentioned were rarely used, but rather that the sociological had such a firm position in the 1990s. I would argue that this is a European trend rather than an American one. The sociological approach is one where researchers relate the child's media use, awareness and pleasure in a social context. The research which had been undertaken, or was in process, covered both positive and negative effects of the media. The most frequent response was that the studies had dealt with media and violence, followed by media education and media and positive effects, and subsequently media and general negative effects. Less frequent, but nevertheless evident, were research studies about media and fear, media policy and media organisations and structures, media literacy, and reception analysis.

Thus I can draw the conclusion that, contrary to the familiar assumption that research about children and the media has been concentrated only in a couple of fields, it has actually followed many different avenues. One should remember, however, that I was asking about research carried out in Europe from 1990 and onwards.

The research had also used many different theoretical frameworks, again a finding contrary to common assumptions. The reception analysis framework was often referred to as significant for current research. This is surprising, as it is a fairly new theoretical approach. The second and third most used frameworks were the more traditional 'effects' and 'uses and gratifications' traditions. However, other recent research approaches were also quite frequently used. Here I refer to cultural indicators and semiotic studies. Thus, again, contrary to what current literature about children often argues, this survey demonstrates that research about children and young people is not simply informed by traditional research frameworks.

The most frequently cited methods used were surveys, in-depth studies and literary reviews, followed by group discussions and participant observation. Interviews, using mainly closed questionnaires, were also quite often used. Laboratory experiments, which had been a research tool often used in the 1960s (for example, most of the research on children and violence on the screen was based on this method), were mentioned by only a few respondents. Again what is significant is that there is not a single research method that dominates. I would interpret this as a very positive trend as no method is perfect in itself and one might gain more knowledge and understanding using a pluralistic approach. It is pleasing to note that so few researchers are using laboratory experiments, as these have been severely criticised for their artificiality.

The most studied media was, without any doubt, television followed by video. Surprisingly enough one quarter of the respondents pointed to radio as their main medium of research. Advertising in television followed, and one should note that this makes television an even more dominant medium in research about children and the media. Around a quarter or less stated that film, video-nasties and computers in general, had also been studied. Some twenty percent mentioned that newspapers, computer games and books had been investigated.

It is interesting to see that books as one of the oldest media, still has the same interest for researchers as one of the newest, i.e. computer games. Interactive television is a new medium much discussed, but so far only eight percent of the scholars in the Higher Education Institutions of the fifteen European countries had been studying this specific medium.

The scholars' evaluation of policy implication and distribution of the research

More than half of the academics believed the research about children had policy implications for the media. The most frequent answer was that research had affected television and the school curriculum. Around ten percent believed that advertising and radio had been influenced by research and others mentioned film, books, newspapers and computer games.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents active in the field of children and media mentioned that teaching about children and the media took place in their institutions (73 percent had indicated that research was carried out).

A surprisingly large percentage of the scholars reported that they were lecturing to primary and secondary schoolteachers (41 percent). Lecturing to interest groups was also quite frequent and so was lecturing to parents. Twenty-four percent of the scholars also mentioned that they lectured to broadcasters in workshops or conferences. However, it is significant that most of these answers were given from scholars from the UK, Germany, France, the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland. Thus the picture drawn here was mainly based on the north-west of the European countries. The situation seems to be very different in the other countries, especially the Mediterranean countries, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. Portugal, like Luxembourg, reported that no research in this field had been undertaken there.

There is little knowledge about research in other European countries, which are not members of the European Union. Norway and Hungary, for example, have quite a well developed research tradition in line with the other north-western European countries, but because of the former Cold War there is very little knowledge of Eastern European countries.

Eastern Europe

In a workshop (1996), arranged by the European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C) in Greece, I interviewed the Heads of Children's Television from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and Romania. They informed me, that to the best of their knowledge, there had not been carried out any research about children and the media in their countries. This does not mean that this is absolutely correct, but if I had carried out similar interviews with the Heads of Children's programmes in north-western Europe, I know (from discussions with them) that they would be well aware of that research had been carried out in their own country, even if they would not necessarily be up to date.

In the light of this I welcome a booklet written by Irving and Tadros (1997)

Children's Film and Television in Central and Eastern Europe. It does not deal with research in the twenty-one countries, but at least it informs about the legislation about violent images. Here follows a short summary.

In Albania, there is a system of self-regulating, "ensuring that violent and erotic programmes are not aired at times when children might be watching television" (Pepo, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 14).

In the Republic of Azerbaijan the rules are: "For public protection, the distribution of films promoting violence and cruelty is liable for a prison term of up to two years or a fine of the equivalent of 700-800 times minimum wage" (Mirkassimov, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 15). Rather harsh, it appears.

From the Republic of Belarus, Andreev informs: "Any use of mass media, literature, shows, etc., which include pornography, the worship of violence and cruelty, or anything which may offend the human dignity and influence children in any harmful way by encouraging them to break the law is punishable by the law" (Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 16).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, "the production and distribution of films is not governed by legislation. No special laws exist to regulate either children's film or children's television" (Selimovic, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 18).

In the Republic of Bulgaria, Dereliev et al. explain that a law was passed about radio and television in 1996: "In programming scheduled between 06.00 and 23.00 it is not permitted to include shows potentially harmful to the psychological, physical, and moral development of children and young adults" (Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 19).

The production and distribution of film are not subject to legislation in the Republic of Croatia. However, broadcasters, "must not offend the public morality, must not show pornography, accentuate violence or provoke racial, religious and ethnic hatred" (Alajbeg et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 21).

In the Czech Republic, "the broadcasting of programmes promoting violence and sex is prohibited by Czech television, which has set up an ethics panel to make recommendations in these matters" (Bajgar et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 23).

Estonia passed a law in 1992 and in article 48 it is stated: "It is forbidden to produce or demonstrate to children any printed material, films videos, or any other implements which propagate cruelty and violence" (Salulai et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p 24).

In the Republic of Georgia minors are protected from watching pornographic or violent films by law (Chigogidze, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 25).

The Hungarian Media Law of 1996 is very similar (Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 26).

The Latvian Electronic Mass Media Act of 1995, article 18.5 states: "Between 07.00 and 22.00 programmes containing violence in visual or textual form, plots associated with the use of drugs are prohibited" (Rubenis et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 28).

Lithuania passed a law in 1991 prohibiting "broadcasting of pornography or violence" (Luiga, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 30).

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia approved a law in 1997 and in article 35 it is stated: "Broadcasting of programmes with indecent content, and in particular with pornography or violence, shall not be permitted" (Lozanovski et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 31).

Moldova has a new law on mass media, but which does not specifically address children. However, the public broadcaster has adopted internal regulations (Pirtac, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 33).

The Broadcasting Act of 1992 in Poland also addresses violence on the screen (Grudzinska, in Irving and Tadros 1997, p. 35).

In Romania a law from 1994 prohibits pornographic and violent images (Chirila et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 37).

In Russia the Law on Mass Media of 1991 protects children from viewing pornography and violent images (Menshikov et al., in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 40).

The Slovak Republic has an Audiovisual Law from 1995. The protection of children from violent images on the screen has not until recently been acknowledged as problem in Slovak-produced shows. However Grujbarova argues: "Violent scenes are appearing more often, in imported television programmes and in foreign television programmes available through satellite or re-transmitted on cable. Without legislative initiative we can take only administrative measures... in the form of licence terms or recommendations for broadcasters... aimed to prevent excesses of violent contents or forms on screen" (Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 43).

In the Republic of Slovenia the public broadcaster RTV is preparing to accept a set of international regulations using the European Broadcasting Union model (Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 45).

Finally, in the Ukraine there are no specific laws mentioning violence on the screen (Polishchuk, in Irving and Tadros, 1997, p. 47).

Thus it appears that the majority of Eastern European countries recently have adopted legislation against the showing of violent images on the screen, at least during certain time periods.

It is also important to remember that after the first World Summit on Television and Children, in Melbourne, Australia, in 1995, a Children's Television Charter was accepted by many television networks all over the world. The Charter is written down in seven bullet points stressing: high quality; the right to see and express the children's own culture, language and life experiences; and that governments, production, distribution and funding organisations should support indigenous children's television. Paragraph 4 explicitly refers to violence and sex: "Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and context, but should not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex."

Research about violence on the screen: a case study of Scandinavia

The argument this part of the article will pursue, is that although research about images of violence in the media has been on the agenda over four decades, the evidence about the impact of violence on the screen varies, not only from researcher to researcher, but between research communities. The research efforts have been differently framed and the emphasis and interpretations of the results have led to different arguments.

In this case study I will analyse how research traditions have changed in Scandinavia from the 1960s to the 1990s. It is significant that the most prominent research theories oriented in the USA: the Catharsis Hypothesis, the Aggressive Cue model, the Observational Learning Theory, the Reinforcement Model and the Cultivation Model (De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982). Four out of these five models or theories assume that mediated violence can influence aggressive behaviour (the Catharsis Hypothesis being the exception).

These theories had a great impact on European research in general, and also in Scandinavia. Researchers in Scandinavia in the 1960s especially favoured the models which argued for the impact of violence of the media on young people. This might appear rather absurd when one considers the difference in media proliferation between the Scandinavian countries and the USA at that time. Denmark had from 1951 to 1986 only one television channel and three radio channels, all following the public service broadcasting model and financed by license fees (DR) (Nordahl Svendsen, 1989). Television in Sweden was similarly introduced as a public service medium (in 1956) and granted a monopoly of broadcasting (SR). A second television channel was opened in 1969 within the same corporation (SR), also without advertising. In Norway only one public institution existed with one radio channel and one television channel (Østbye, 1992).

Times have changed. In Denmark, Nordahl Svendsen (1989) reports that, apart from the new channel TV 2, which is financed through advertising (3/4) and a licence fee (1/4), Danes can now receive nine local television channels. Satellite television can be received by 61 percent (1994), and 53 percent of Danes (1994) can choose to watch Swedish television channels and 48 percent German television channels. There are (1995) two terrestrial channels, three satellite channels and two satellite/pay channels.

In Norway, a second television channel was established in 1992. In a country where the population was used to receiving only one television channel (apart from roughly one-quarter of the Norwegians who also in earlier days could receive Swedish television), its citizens could suddenly choose between two domestic channels, and, in addition, five satellite channels from Britain, France, Germany and the rest of Scandinavia and two satellite/pay-TV channels.

In Sweden the developments were similar. In 1985, the first Swedish households were connected to cable on a commercial basis. In 1994, 60 percent of the population had access to satellite, and "in the late 1980s satellite channels intended for Swedish audiences – TV3, TV4, TV5 Nordic, SF-Succé and Film-Net – became available to cabled households" (Cronholm, 1993, p. 5). In 1995 there were three terrestrial channels, five satellite channels and four satellite/pay-TV channels.

McQuail's argument (1990) that the developments of broadcasting in Europe have gone from the "old order" of national monopolies to the "new order" of duopolistic system, can now be applied to the Scandinavian countries.

It is important to describe the changing media systems in Scandinavia. Research is never free-floating, but must be seen in the context of the society, as the media systems are highly significant part of that society. This must be of special importance when discussing the discourses of research on violence on television, because one valid argument appears to be that the discourses would vary with the amount of television a society offers its citizens, and that the quantity of television, theoretically, if not necessarily, might influence the availability of violent images.

Public concern about media violence and its alleged effects, was evident in Scandinavia. In Sweden, for example, the Swedish branch of The Save the Children Fund ran two campaigns against violence on television during the 1970s, and actions have been taken by parent associations and groups concerned with children. However, writing in 1977 von Feilitzen noted: "the judgment is commonly made that the Scandinavian countries, particularly perhaps Sweden and Norway, have the least television violence in the world" (p. 61).

This appears paradoxical. Given that the media systems at the time were so restricted, and that the output of violent programmes was rather small, why did researchers, The Save the Children Fund, other organisations, parents and general debaters worry so much? The answer comes promptly in von Feilitzen's argument:

> Even if Swedish television is on an average less 'hard' (violent) than in many other countries, such series have also been broadcast which are high on the American violence ratings, such as Kojak, Baretta, and Rockford (von Feilitzen et al., 1977, p. 62).

One can question how violent the above-mentioned programmes actually were compared with the satellite programmes and video-nasties of later decades, but it is essential to realise that this argument was considered to be an urgent one then, as it also appears to be today in both Western and Eastern Europe.

However, there is another trend in the early Scandinavian research, apart from the focus on the seemingly rather low output of violent programmes. Most of the early Scandinavian research reports are summaries of foreign studies, above all American ones. The media systems in the USA and Scandinavia were, of course, very different in those days. However, this did not appear to bother Bruun Pedersen from Denmark (1984), who concluded:

> It is unthinkable that something would appear which changed the main research evidence we have referred to earlier: 'violence on television has harmful effects on children and young people'. It is about time that we proceed from this conclusion and establish controls on this, because in a very few years the violence influence from television will have a scope much larger than today. We should be prepared for when that time comes (Bruun Pedersen, 1984, p. 77).

On the whole Scandinavian researchers at the time were not afraid of applying foreign research evidence to the Scandinavian setting. The main arguments were that foreign programmes with violent images were part of the Scandinavian output and that the few Scandinavian studies undertaken agreed with international research. However, already in 1977, Vaagland from Norway argued: "It is risky to use American results as a base for arguing about violence on Norwegian television" (p. 3).

The other classical discourse was over the question of whether researchers had agreed on the results from the research or not. This is obviously connected to the debate about how applicable research from other countries is. Bruun Pedersen (1984) from Denmark clearly gave his opinions about the relevance of the research.

One who didn't agree was Vaagland (1977) who pointed out that politicians and other moral entrepreneurs had accepted the conclusions from foreign studies without asking questions about the methods used. For example, he was critical of laboratory experiments with young children which tested levels of aggression in children's behaviour after viewing violence. Aggression was defined as beating an inflatable Bobo-doll without any negative consequences for the child.

Vaagland's position thus is fairly similar to the critical position of some British scholars working in this field at the time. Halloran (1978) pointed out that much of the research on violence had been carried out in the USA and that cross-cultural generalisations were not really valid because the USA, media-wise and otherwise, historically and at the present time, differed from what was prevalent in many other countries.

Although the first Scandinavian studies pointed to the importance of parental influence and the child's background and also the relatively limited number of violent incidents on television (Linné, 1969; Vaagland, 1977), and thus were less alarmist than many results of studies from the USA, the debates continued. The effects that were mostly discussed in the Scandinavian violence debates at this time were children's imitation of violence; modelling; reinforcement of existing violent tendencies, fear and desensitisation (Linné, 1982).

As there were so few Scandinavian studies carried out, most of the debates in the early years were not only influenced, but based on American models and paradigms. The more critical British tradition at the time, here illustrated by Halloran's work, was much less influential on this specific issue.

Recent trends in Scandinavian research

In 1993, a major book on violence and the media based on Scandinavian research was published (von Feilitzen, Forsman and Roe). The chapters were written by fourteen scholars from the Nordic countries, who all either studied violence in the media for a considerable time, or had written their doctoral theses on the subject. It is interesting to note that most entries do not deal with violence on television, but rather analyse violence in videos, films, computer games, music videos, or pornography.

Many different dimensions have been covered in these studies about video violence. However, I would argue that the most interesting dimension, seen in the light of this paper, is not much dealt with. Only one of the articles discusses the effects of watching video violence. More essays point to how video violence is used by different subgroups in a socio-cultural content. The research about video violence has thus to a great extent taken another path than was expected when one refers to the early concerns about videos. Perhaps this can be explained by a new framework.

It also seems clear that those major Scandinavian film scholars, currently studying violence in films are more interested in discussing and analysing subcultures, narratives, genres and the cultural and historical contexts, than even approaching the traditional questions about harmful effects of viewing these violent films.

Jensen (1993) asserts that during the last decade violence-as-moving-image has found a new medium to be developed in, namely computer or video games, and that this specific medium appears to celebrate violence. The screen is swarming with street-fighters, aliens and combat soldiers with pump-guns. It is also a medium which is gender specific. Reception and media ethnographic studies as well as direct observation confirm that this is "a man's world" (p. 151). Jensen claims that there is very little research about computer games in the Nordic countries and that the scarce international research has been based on traditional effects models and psychological theories, "without attempting to understand and describe the phenomenon in its social and cultural context" (p. 152). The social context in this case is Denmark and Jensen writes about masculinity, and power plays, after having described the various genres and narratives. His conclusion is that the fascination for young men in playing these games is that they are a play room where one can create one's own power. "A possibility to live where one has the power – rather than where one is powerless" (Jensen, 1993, p. 170).

In the very beginning of Forsman's article about violence in music videos he manifestly positions himself declaring: "It is often claimed that music videos contain more sex and violence than other television genres. Sweepingly it is maintained that the 'violent narrative style' creates everything from concentration problems to perpetrators of violent acts. It is not only from the USA we hear statements like this; even in Sweden there exist new moralistic doomsday prophets and crusades against all imaginable popular and youth cultures" (Forsman, 1993, p. 175). He then studies narratives and genres and concludes that violence taken up by researchers – is that of reception analysis and the nature of 'pleasure' derived from viewing. We have already reported a similar trend evident in the research of 15 European countries. Forsman also adds the possibility that violence is used by television channels and the rock music industry as a way to attract younger audiences.

Similarly, Svensson (1993) affirms in his study of pornographic violence that it is currently often claimed that pornographic film reaches more people today then ever before, because of the home video market, and the expansion of cable-television. Pornographic films are also regularly broadcast on satellites. He argues that there are interesting similarities between the debate about 'extreme violence' and 'pornographic violence' and that in both cases the debates about harmful effects are mixed up with demands for more censorship. He concludes that there is no clear research evidence that pornography causes violent crimes, including rape. Svensson does not believe that research about the effects of pornography should be used as an argument for censorship of pornography in societies. This should be a political and not a research decision. He concludes that censorship against pornography is not necessarily beneficial because, in his view, the increased censorship is more dangerous than are the possible harmful effects of pornography.

These studies are all concerned with 'extremely violent' images, as the scholars point out. What emerges from this last-mentioned collection of studies is an apparent consensus not to discuss 'harmful' or other effects of computer games, violent music videos or pornographic videos. From a interpretative perspective, they analyse this intriguing world of violent images and their function for subcultures. There also appears to be a consensus in their condemnation of 'moral crusaders' who are looked upon as being against popular and youth cultures. As the scholars, not only those just mentioned, but also those who have studied 'extreme violence' in videos and films, frequently refer to the 'moral crusaders' in their texts, we must assume, that the debates about harmful effects of different forms of media violence, have continued in the Scandinavian societies.

How are we to explain that researchers in the Scandinavian societies during the period of restricted media policy, few television channels, no satellites, hardly any video, few films with 'extreme violence' and no violent music videos or computer games or pornographic video images, whatsoever, discussed and studied media effects and were extremely wary of the future development of the media, whereas many researchers now when these night-marish developments appear to have happened, are instead studying the images, rather than the effects of the images?

Other Scandinavian research, however, has a different emphasis. Anita Werner (1994) in *Children in the Television Age* gives a conservative estimate that 0.1 per cent of boys in Norway can be affected by media violence and behave with increased aggression. Ragnhild Bjørnebekk (1994), also from Norway, points out that the debate about violence and its effects has been with us for many years but that the results are contradictory and probably says more about the person writing than something important about the function of violence for children and young people.

Von Feilitzen gives a list of other important factors relating to aggression and violence that research has pointed out: "The child's and adolescent's personality, capacities, and earlier aggression; conditions in family, school, and peer groups (for example, aggression at home, a school that does not encourage one's capacity, lack of popularity among peers); socio-cultural background and societal conditions (although the last-mentioned conditions have not been empirically studied). Thus, the 'entertainment violence' plays in the long (as in the short) run only a contributing role and comes in as a faint reinforcement in a syndrome of other far more important circumstances" (Feilitzen, 1994, p. 149). She also points out that: "Sweden has had only a slight increase in the number of violent crimes. On the other hand, we have had a substantial increase in theft and other economic criminality" (von Feilitzen, 1994, p. 152).

Bjørnebekk (1994) argues that, in contrast to the USA, children as murderers or perpetrators of serious violence are uncommon in England and Norway and that the rise in crime in both countries, are mostly related to property. Von Feilitzen (1994) states: "In sum, different persons experience excitement, violence, horror, and power – as well as other media and cultural contexts – very differently, need it differently, and attach different meanings to it" (von Feilitzen, 1994, p. 159).

The changed face of Scandinavian research

I introduced some trends in the research debate about violence on television in the 1970s in Scandinavia. One was the discussion over whether one could apply research violence findings from other countries (mostly from the USA) to the Scandinavian context. Most common among researchers at the time was a clear acceptance that one could, building on the argument that the Scandinavian countries imported fiction films and programmes from the USA. Only occasionally were there voices of dissent from this view.

In the 1990s the situation is completely contradictory, because now only occasionally we hear arguments agreeing that findings from the USA could be imported to the Nordic context.

One reason for this is that today there exists much more Scandinavian-based research in comparison with some twenty years ago — research which on the whole has demonstrated much less spectacular effects than was assumed. At the same time there is a growing awareness among social science scholars not to study the media in isolation, but in its social context. Another argument from the 1970s dealt with the question whether researchers had agreed amongst themselves on the validity of the (foreign) findings and there were strong arguments that there existed a consensus among the majority of the scholars for doing so. Again occasional voices protested and criticised the American research as being psychologistic, artificial and parochial. However, building on the conviction of the validity of the (foreign) research, Scandinavian scholars demanded that 'something had to be done' and requested more censorship.

This argument was coupled with the fear of an expanding media system which in the future would allow more violent images to be imported. Although the researchers from the 1970s anticipated (and feared) media development and media expansion, they did not suspect what an enormous explosion of media was to follow. For example, in 1981, the Danish Media Commission, voted against for establishing a Nordic satellite channel (NORDSAT). The decision was partly based on the arguments that the channel would carry imported programmes from the USA and that Scandinavian viewers would prefer American fiction programmes to Scandinavian programmes.

Now in the 1990s the Nordic countries have experienced rapid media development and there has also been rapid development of research on the media (Carlsson, 1995).

However, the most intriguing and rather unexpected trend is that direct/sole television casual effects on violent behaviour are not even mentioned in the literature from the 1990s. All the research findings, when mentioning violence on television, treats television as a possible contributory factor in real-life violence but *never* as the sole cause. Viewing violence on television might, at the most, contribute 0,1% to 10% to the level of violence in society (Werner, 1994; von Feilitzen, 1994) and the groups who can be affected by violence seem to grow smaller and smaller (Linné, 1995).

There are also voices from Scandinavia denying any harmful effects of watching violence on television. Thus when the Scandinavian countries only had one public broadcasting channel each or two (in Sweden), and then very restrictive policies about the import of violent programmes, the 'moral panics' among the researchers seem to have been much more explicit than now. This trend is extremely clear when one is analysing studies concerning 'extreme violence', from video nasties, to horror films, to violent images in music, to pornographic violent images and violent computer games. The researchers studying these areas and themes were not interested in questions about effects, but they studied the content, the images and how different sub-groups used the media material and negotiated the texts. It is evident that today much more research is carried out about the media than only a decade ago and this is probably due to the proliferation of old and new media. Contrary to what one could have predicted, however, the research in the 1990s is not at all as dominated by effects studies.

Have the researchers in Scandinavia changed paradigms or at least attitudes? It is important here to remember, that most researchers during the early years were trained as social scientists and that in Scandinavia at the time, social sciences were very influenced by the American behaviourist traditions. Most of the voices from Scandinavia from the 1990s, working in the effects tradition, proceed much more carefully than their early colleagues. Undoubtedly this is also based on the fact that the research community actually knows more about the media surrounding us, then they did in the 1970s. There is a growing hesitation to explain complicated social phenomena to one powerful single cause. The other part of the answer is that there are now many more voices in the 1990s – among these are scholars trained in other disciplines, mostly the humanities. Having another background their research interests have been geared in other directions. There is still a paradox in the Scandinavian scenario, namely the frequent mention of never ending 'moral panics'.

In the very early years it appears that scholars participated and argued for more censorship, but in the 1990s most of the researchers quoted are opposed to more censorship, even though they are discussing 'extreme violence' and not the 'Kojak-type' violence.

The 'moral entrepreneurs' seem thus no longer to be the researchers, but parents, politicians, journalists, and generally concerned public debaters. While, in the 1970s, the arguments were that research had proved that it was dangerous for children and young people to watch violence (or at least large amounts of violence) on television, the majority of the research community today would avoid statements like this. This, of course, might cause frustrations for 'the concerned' who are convinced that the tide of violent images must have some direct causal effect on children and young people. When the Scandinavian researchers point out that 0.1 percent to 10 percent of the build up of aggression might be contributed by watching violent television, films, videos, etc., they can not predict which of the children will be affected. This, coupled with a growing hesitation to explain complicated social issues with one cause, might be another reason for most media scholars in the 1990s in the Scandinavian countries to study constructions and narratives of media images and how the media are used and negotiated by different subcultures, rather than to continue to concentrate on the elusive effects of violent media. After having examined the Scandinavian countries as a case study, we now return to the general European picture. Here we look at how academics themselves evaluate the research that has been undertaken in this field.

A European scenario

In the survey referred to earlier (Linné, 1996), where I had received answers from one hundred and seven Higher Education Institutions in the fifteen member states of the European Community, forty-five percent of the scholars said that they themselves had carried out a study about violence and the media or written on the theme.

I asked the last-mentioned academics to evaluate the linkage between media violence and violence in society: "What is your personal opinion based on your interpretation of the research evidence on the causal link between violence in the media and violence in society"? Twenty-two percent of the scholars stated: "there is an evident causal link". Thirty-three percent said: "there is a vague causal link only for some children". Four percent answered: "there is no causal link". Twenty-nine percent of the scholars chose to tick: "the question about violence in the media is too simplistic to explain complicated social phenomena". Two percent of them discussed "multi causality" and ten percent did not answer the question. The answers can be interpreted as an indication of the well-known divide in the research community.

On the other hand, only a fifth of the researchers active in the field in 1995 (when they answered the questionnaire) believed "there is an evident causal link".

The vast majority of the scholars were more in doubt. Thirty-three percent each went either for the "vague causal link" or find it "too simplistic to explain complicated social phenomena" with one cause – the media – or denied all causal links (four percent).

I also asked about policy implications of the research on violence for the mass media industry in the academics' own country. Forty-seven percent of the scholars answered that they believed the research had policy implications for the industry.

On an open question twenty-four percent mentioned legislation and again twenty-four percent stated that research contributed to debates about violence on the screen. Fourteen percent mentioned that new guidelines had been adopted in their country and ten percent that scheduling had been changed. The rest of the answers deal with that teachers and parents now know more about the elusive question about violence on the screen and therefore could guide the children better. Other scholars mention that the research had instigated important debates about censorship and advertising.

I also asked if scholars applied research evidence from other countries to explain effects of mediated violence in their own counties. Forty-nine percent of the academics said they did. Most of the answers came from the countries which had not been able to carry out research in their own environment – mostly the Mediterranean countries.

Finally I asked which country, in their view, had produced useful research about children and mediated violence. The fifteen European Community countries were listed and I had added The US, Canada and Australia, as these countries often are referred to in relation to violence on the screen. The majority, sixty-seven percent, of the European scholars pointed to that relevant research had been carried out in the UK, a country where scholars persistently has argued against the direct/causal effects of violence on the screen to violence acts in the society (Halloran, 1978; Murdock and McCron, 1979; Howitt and Cumberbatch, 1975; Buckingham, 1993; Gauntlett, 1995; Barker and Petley, 1997). However, almost the same number of scholars (65 percent) mentioned research carried out in the US, a country where research often has argued for causal effects (Bandura, 1968; De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982; Comstock, 1990; Gerbner, 1994).

The third most frequent mentioned country was Sweden (forty-three percent), which is on one hand quite surprising as it has a relatively small population, but on the other hand research about violence in the media has been a persistent theme. Germany followed in fourth place (thirty-nine percent), Australia in fifth position (thirty-seven percent). Canada came in surprisingly low in the sixth position (thirty-one percent). The Netherlands followed with twenty-six percent and Denmark and Finland received twenty percent and eighteen percent respectively. Ireland and Italy each were referred to by six percent, Austria and Spain by four percent and Belgium by two percent. Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal were not mentioned at all. Two percent of the academics mentioned research from Japan.

Overall, the academics in the European community reported that little research had taken place in the Mediterranean countries and much more in the north-west of Europe. The question of the relevance of research about violence and the media mirrors the indigenous academics description. Given that it is important to carry out research in a societal context, as research never is free-floating or indeed "objective", it appears that it would be of the utmost importance for the European countries, especially those around the Mediterranean and the countries from Eastern Europe to research images about violence. There were more voices from the north-western part of Europe who mentioned that relevant research about violence had been carried out in the UK and Scandinavia and more of the voices from the southern part of Europe who mentioned research from the US. As the case study from Scandinavia demonstrated, it might not be wise just to adopt research paradigms and research evidence from one country to the other.

As a result of this present research I would, therefore, recommend that the first priority should be that research in these countries should be encouraged by the European Community and UNESCO in order that a body of research, relevant to each country, can be built up. I would add that this research needs to be undertaken carefully with the specific socio-historic needs of those countries taken into account. This is the only way in which we can build up a more systematic and relevant bank of knowledge, on which it would be possible to base decisions.

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Why Do We Watch Television Violence?

Argentine Field Research

TATIANA MERLO-FLORES

Violence in television programs and its repercussion on children have been the subject of extensive research.

Opinions in the debate range from those who consider that the screen is a mirror of social reality to those who believe the effects of violence to be devastating, particularly for children and adolescents. The former tend to justify it, while the latter would like to do away with it.

Social reality deserves a complex analysis; when humans are at stake one cannot jump to conclusions. This paralyzing complexity often results in a third position where everything is seen as relative and where the relation that both children and adolescents establish with television is thought to depend on their family and social environment, on their personal characteristics, etc., something which has come to be known as 'mediating variables'.

Though true, this should not prevent us from finding the unifying variables and the relations that enable us to understand and explain in order to transform.

When faced with the problem of children's relations to TV, these three approaches can hardly provide feasible answers for those responsible for children or for media production; we seem to be at a dead end.

For over twenty years, I have carried out field research, by combining systematically quantitative and qualitative methodologies while working with psychological techniques so as to approach the problem also from the unconscious level. Here I will briefly present some of the angles of analysis and the findings of various works, where scales, rates and similar variables were used to enable comparisons throughout time and different samples.

The findings show the need to focus on the TV problem from two different overlapping and simultaneous levels:

- A general more inclusive level, leaving practically nobody out, related to the conversation contents, the subjects that television introduces in public debate, in society and in our everyday life.
- A second level in which program contents act as compensatory mechanisms arising when there is some type of deficiency – either individual or social.

At the first level, both children and adolescents draw elements from the language, fashion style, social or relational issues to communicate, thus conforming to a television subculture. Television here has a socially leveling function by providing children with a common language enabling them to share a common experience: television.

A work carried out on a sample of 2,000 children from urban areas (Merlo-Flores, 1980) showed that *all* children watch television, even those that do not own a set, since they go over to their friends' homes. The most curious finding was that they report to each other whatever they have not been able to watch. Television programming has become the unavoidable subject of conversation. Those unable to follow it are left out as if living in a foreign country. It is interesting to observe how children manage to avoid this.

It is easy to watch how children play, talk, get angry or show affection for each other, through elements drawn from television. One of those elements, perhaps the most repetitive, is that of aggression. Whether good or bad, heroes or bandits, cartoon, science fiction or real characters, they all show that violence is the quickest, most efficient, clean and consequence-free way to solve problems and to attain objectives. It has been repeated ad nauseam that children imitate what they see on TV. When carrying out experimental studies researchers sit with a number of children to watch films containing violence, and with others to watch similar films without aggressive content, in order to observe their immediate behaviors. They are looking for the obvious: imitation.

Television with its load of institutionalized violence, gives children and youngsters "permission" to use it. A message is conveyed together with the way of decoding it, violence is a "legitimate" means. Aggression has grown into a new *communication code*, particularly for the youngest. But does this mean that children become aggressive? Not necessarily so.

This getting used to violence brings about a greater aggression in the usual way of communicating, but does *not* modify the structure of children's personality, making them violent. Those children who already are aggressive by temperament or due to family, social or individual problems, select and integrate violent elements from television, while children with what may be deemed a "normal" load of aggression may watch the same program and choose the same character for identification, yet, unlike their more aggressive peers, do not select or integrate violent elements.

Here the second level related to the compensation for deficiencies and needs comes into play. *Both social groups and people project their problems, their needs or wants into what they select and integrate from TV. There is enough evidence to affirm that this material also can be used as a projective social and individual test, since it contributes not only to the knowledge of the specific deficiency but also to the knowledge of the specific compensatory mechanism used.*

Following the more or less permanent traces left by this process is of fundamental importance, for evident research findings state that children's relationships to media violence depend on the load of aggression with which they approach the screen. Obviously long and short term consequences will differ.

Here working with the relation between children and television becomes essential, taking into account particularly the simultaneous and overlapping levels of analysis.

My hypothesis is that although children with an aggressive personality structure, while watching TV initially reach a catharsis,[1] *in the long run this adds potential to their violent traits by reinforcing them. Moreover, they will have learned multiple alternative ways of manifesting aggression and of justifying it as a legitimate means to reach their objectives.*

On the other hand, children who do not present an aggressive personality structure learn to communicate via violent codes (ways of speaking, "playing", etc.), consistent with the level of imitation; these children not only do not modify their personality structure but in the long run this familiarity with aggression as a code of communication makes them afraid. These are the adults that visualize the world as hostile.

About fifteen years ago, I started a research work as an attempt to confirm the well known hypothesis that violence increases aggressive behavior in children: *Television as Compensatory for Needs* (Merlo-Flores, Usandivaras and Rey, 1983). Knowing children's personality traits, particularly in terms of the degree of aggression, seemed to me of fundamental importance. Therefore I worked with Dr. Raúl Usandivaras, an internationally well known psychiatrist, who carried out various studies regarding projective tests as diagnosis tools. The qualitative methodology applied was designed so as to take into account children's environment and the bonds established therein. In 1994, I repeated the work keeping the methodology, the school and the age group constant (Merlo-Flores, 1995).

Important research findings

The most important findings from this research work are:

- Identification with television models only takes place in the presence of family conflicts.
- The television content selected and integrated is only used as a compensatory mechanism by children or youngsters suffering from some kind of want.
- This compensation does not necessarily take place through programs most often seen or commented on by children but through their favorite characters.
- The child unconsciously selects and integrates those specific elements precisely consistent with his problems. All children presenting difficulties in their family ties identify themselves with leading TV characters.
- Though the same character or person may be selected by a great number of children, each one of them will only select or integrate that trait which makes up for his specific need.

- Children with similar problems will draw from different characters similar compensatory elements.
- A careful analysis of what and how they select and integrate contents will enable us to deal with this material as a projective test; thus we can unveil not only the need but also the actual compensatory mechanism used, an aspect which standard psychological tests fail to show.
- These findings are valid both at personal and social levels. The needs and wants of significant groups in our society are projected into the selected and integrated television material. Here we may speak of a projective social test.
- In both cases television plays a similar role to that of dreams.
- Violence presented by television is used as a code of communication; this does not necessarily mean that inner personality structures will be modified.
- Violence is selected and integrated specifically through the target characters of a projective identification.
- Violence on television is *only* selected and integrated by children showing aggressive traits as seen in the analysis of the projective tests.
- Even when identified with an aggressive character, children with a "normal" degree of aggression for their age neither select or integrate their aggressive traits.
- Violence drawn from television, whenever manifest aggression is seen in a child, acts as a means of attaining a catharsis.[1]

These findings are only a close synthesis of what, in the fashion of a hypothesis, is to be demonstrated in this chapter.

Case study

The purpose of the following work is to delve into the deeper unconscious aspects that lead us to prefer certain television characters and programs; to analyze the material selected, the reasons for its selection and the use made of the material; and, finally, to establish the relation between one's own aggression and violence as featured in television characters and programs.

Methodological aspects

Approximately ten hours work was spent on each child. The techniques used for gathering information were:

1) A battery of psychological tests:
   a) drawing a person's body
   b) drawing a person of the other sex
   c) drawing an animal
   d) writing a story with the chosen animal

e) drawing a family in action

f) three free subject drawings in color

g) writing a story using one or all free drawings

The basic aim was to determine aggression, identification and family ties.

2) A questionnaire on the use of television.

The questionnaire was designed as an open interview on a number of subjects in a guide. It included the following questions:

1. What programs do you like best?
2. What do you like about these programs?
3. Which is your favorite character?
4. What do you like about him?
5. Would you like to be like him?
6. In what way?
7. What for?
8. Would you like to be like him when you grow up?
9. In what way?
10. What program do you like the least?
11. Why?
12. What character do you like the least?
13. Why?
14. Do you discuss TV programs with your friends?
15. Which programs?
16. What do you talk about?
17. Do you play things you see on TV?
18. What do you play?
19. With whom?
20. Where?
21. What other games do you like to play?
22. What sports do you play?
23. How often?
24. Where?
25. With whom?
26. If a child comes up to you and calls you names, what do you do?
27. If you were a grown up and a thief broke into your home, what would you do?
28. How many hours a day do you watch TV?

3) Children's life history as told by parents.

The usual model for interviews was used to draw up the guide, adding a few supplementary questions regarding parents knowledge of their children's TV habits.

Procedures of analysis

Once the information was gathered, the results of the projective tests were handed to a psychiatrist (Dr. Usandivaras) for interpretation. He was asked to pinpoint the topics he considered highly relevant for the study:

- aggression
- identification with one's own sex
- role identification
- family ties

Questionnaires and life histories were studied by analyzing the same items simultaneously. With regard to children's preferences special attention was given to the outstanding ones checking for coincidences, or the lack of them, with family and personality traits. Before knowing the results of the psychological study, an individual analysis was carried out for each case.

Therefore, initially, the analysis of the material gathered took place separately: the tests on the one hand, and the questionnaires and stories, on the other, only to match the results at a second stage.

Schematic analysis of relations between variables

Four variables of manifest behavior associated with television were selected:

- conversation
- selection of aggressive elements from the screen: mention of deaths, shootings, fist blows, etc.
- games
- character identification

Three family and personality variables were derived from the psychological study:

- family ties
- identification
- aggression

The variables Conversation, Games and Identification stand in the analysis of the material gathered as more clearly manifesting the degree of apprehension and internalization of television patterns by children (variable justification).

The psychological study was based on the variables known as Family Ties, Identification and Aggression; the choice was part of an effort to detect their implication concerning greater or lesser receptivity to television violence as manifest in behavior.

Conversation deals with the use children make of television content as a subject of conversation with their peers. It could be discussed either within or outside school. In the first case it is considered a superficial manifestation possibly conditioned by the environment. The second case implies a personal choice to discuss television subjects. This first variable itself is consistent with the level of apprehension.

Games refer to the use made by children of television contents in their games. The importance of this variable with regard to the world of children can never be overemphasized. It is also interesting to see here whether these games take place exclusively within the school environment. Although also related to the apprehension level, this variable is manifest to a greater degree as the child here not only airs the subject but also incorporates it into his activity.

Identification with the character is said to exist whenever the child expresses his/her wish to be, either at present or in the future, like the chosen television character. Here we are at the internalization level, for the identification responds to the individual's innermost personality traits. Let us not forget that personality itself is gradually formed through a series of identifications.

The personal and family variables were selected in order to determine a) the presence or absence of problems in family ties as probable cause of a greater assimilation of television violence; b) whether aggression as a personality trait was affected by the internalization of violent patterns drawn from television; and c) if an adequate identification with their own sex served as a cause concomitant in the integration of such patterns.

Although these variables, being specifically psychological, are dealt with as such by specialists carrying out the analysis, when describing the way they were gathered and processed our definitions will be operational.

Aggression means as manifest in tests on aggressive attitudes (in as far as it deviates, one way or the other, from the adequate discharge usually corresponding to the age).

Identification refers to the adequate or inadequate identification with sex and roles. Sexual identification refers to the degree of adjustment between the biological sex and the perception of belonging to the same sex. Identity is constructed by means of different integrated models and is defined by relationships. Understanding this basic trait can possibly be related to the assimilation of violent behavioral patterns.

Family ties was assigned great importance since previous works have indicated a relation between parental image, communication, etc., and certain preferences in children's choices of television programs. A deeper analysis of the reasons for possible conflicts is not as relevant for the study as the particular way in which the child perceives the relationship with the family group. It is common knowledge that what often appears as a conflict situation, feelings of abandonment or fantasies of being slighted by the family group can be modified by adequate treatment or simply outgrow. This makes the findings valid only for the moment the test is carried out, so precautions were taken to have both the interview conducted and the test taken on the same day.

Schematic Analysis of Variables

Case	TV related variables	Family and personality variables	
Pedro	Conversation: + (school) Games: - Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	conflictive - parents separated adequate +
Silvia	Conversation: + (school) Games: + (home) Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	little communication not well defined +
Matias	Conversation: + (school) Games: + (home) Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	contradictory data adequate +
Damián	Conversation: + (school) Games: + (school-home) Identification with character: + Violence selected: -	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	conflict: parents separated adequate no signs
Adriana	Conversation: + (school) Games: - Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	conflict: aloofness adequate +
Carmen	Conversation: + (school) Games: + (home) Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	lack of affection and comm. adequate +
Alejandro	Conversation: + Games: + (school-home) Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	insecure – derisive father rigid structure confusion about role guilty feelings manifest signs/ directed outwardly
Claudio	Conversation: + Games: + Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	poor communication, family not united, need for support difficulty defining roles strong signs
Veronica	Conversation: + Games: + Identification with character: + Violence selected: +	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	dissociated, omnipotent mother, father disqualifed inadequate clear signs and repressed expansion, anxiety
Maria	Conversation: + (at school) Games: + Identification with Character: Violence selected: -	Family ties: Identification: Aggression:	very good adequate no signs

Case	TV related variables	Family and personality variables	
Maria S.	Conversation: + (school-home)	Family ties:	conflictive
	Games: +	Identification:	adequate
	Identification with character:+	Aggression:	manifest sign
	Violence selected: +		
Ernest	Conversation: + (home)	Family ties:	good
	Games: +	Identification:	adequate
	Identification with character: -	Aggression:	no signs
	Violence selected: -		
Laura	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties:	conflictive
	Games: + (school-home)	Identification:	not clear
	Identification with character: +	Aggression:	no manifest signs
	Violence selected: -		
Ricardo	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties:	good
	Games: -	Identification:	adequate
	Identification with character: -	Aggression:	no manifest sign
	Violence selected: -		
Ana	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties:	conflictive
	Games: -	Identification:	adequate
	Identification with character: +	Aggression:	no manifest sign
	Violence selected: -		
Mariela	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties:	conflictive - no family image
	Games: + (school)		
	Identification with character: +	Identification:	adequate
	Violence selected: +	Aggression:	positive (repressed)
Roberto	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties	conflictive parents hard to reach
	Games: -		
	Identification with character: +	Identification:	inadequate
	Violence selected: +	Aggression:	positive (repressed)
Anibal	Conversation: + (school)	Family ties:	little communication feelings of loneliness
	Games: + (home)		
	Identification with character: +	Identification:	adequate
	Violence selected: -	Aggression:	no signs
Maria Sol	Conversation: +	Family ties:	insecurity and helplessness
	Games: +	Identification:	unclear, need for masculine figure to identify with
	Identification with character: +		
	Violence selected: +	Aggression:	manifest signs with difficulty controlling it, expansion
M. Constanza	Conversation: +	Family ties:	highly disturbed, feelings of being left
	Games: +		
	Identification with character: +	Identification:	confusion of roles father figure disqualified
	Violence selected: +	Aggression:	outwardly directed signs, stress and insecurity

This schematic study shows:

- All children discuss television based subjects: this is what is known as using television as a common frame of reference. Thus, TV acts as a socially leveling factor, enabling children's access and use of a single code of communication.
- Children's identification with a television character was always present whenever problems in the family ties were found. 85% of the children sampled had some type of family conflict.
- In all cases with good family ties identification by the child with the television character was not found.
- Although 66% of children's games include elements or issues drawn from the television programs, no element link with personality variables was found. Even so it may be considered as part of the shared frame of reference.
- Sexual and role identification is adequate in most of the children (58%). The 42% showing inadequate sexual and role identification show difficulties in their family ties and an "identification with television characters".
- In the tests, 66% of children show signs of aggression, this trait being again associated with family conflicts. All members of this group show an identification with television characters. However, not all children who identify themselves with a character have aggressive traits.
- Preference arises as the variable determining the use made by children of the television programs. Practically all children watch programs because other children do, yet, identification is only found in those who prefer the program.
- Children presenting signs of aggression select the violent traits from their *favorite* characters and programs.
- Fifteen years later similarities and differences among the various variables studied became evident. Results regarding the degree of aggression and the selection of violent screen elements remain 100% constant in both studies. When the first work was carried out, the proportion of children with a good sexual and role identification stood at 80%. In the 1994 research work this had changed dramatically – only 20% children showed a good identification. Although generalizations based on qualitative work are not possible, I still want to point out the fact that in many family drawings the mother received preferential place and size, often aggressive ones, while the father figure appeared as much smaller.

Television as a means of compensating for personal wants – some comparative examples

We will now compare similar cases in order to specify and clarify the relation between them.

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Ricardo and Matías

Two children with very different personality traits, Ricardo and Matías, prefer the same characters with supernatural powers. In the tests Ricardo showed a correct sexual identification and no signs of aggression; his family ties are good; according to his mother he is afraid of being alone. He watches an average 6 hours a day, but never with his mother.

Matías, on the other hand, shows evident signs of aggression in all his drawings and presents a correct identification; yet, through the life history as told by the mother, the female figure appears as dominant in the family. The child is with his mother "at all times" except during school hours; she watches "every" television program with him. According to Matías he watches TV between 6 1/2 to 8 hours a day, is afraid of darkness and of being alone. Both children have professional parents.

Let us turn to what each of these children states about his favorite character: Matías chooses an imaginary character with powers; he likes the violence about him, "I would like to be like him when I grow up". He discusses his favorite programs with friends and, at home, usually makes believe that he is one of theses characters ("I like him and the way he lies"), imitating everything they do, "particularly the strength". This child not only identifies himself with the character but he plays this game at home where he is not conditioned to do so as he would, for example, be at school where friends may choose television subjects to play.

Ricardo chooses the same character "for the good he does", but admits he "wouldn't like to be like him at all". He discusses with friends what he watches on TV, they talk about "its production and the science fiction elements in it", in other words, about factors we may regard as incidental. He does not mention the character as an element in his conversation. As for playing TV subjects, he admits doing it: he mentions football, that is to say, he does choose a game specifically drawn from television, but a popular sport also broadcast on TV.

Although both children watch TV for many hours and have chosen the same character, there is an obvious difference between them: Ricardo neither identifies himself with any character trait in particular, nor draws from any of them for his games; namely, he uses the entertaining aspects and the subjects for his conversation. This means that we are at an apprehension level: the child draws from TV at a superficial level. At this level television acts as a means of social leveling conveying the patterns, theme, and language serving to conform a frame of reference where everyone shares a common experience.

In Matías, identification with the character can be clearly seen by the way it is integrated with his games and conversation; what Matías looks for in the character responds to some characteristics in his personality. He needs a powerful and fearful figure to identify with and thus possibly channel his great aggression, transferring his fear to others by becoming the frightening character. Here we face a selective and integrating process responding to deep personality traits that upset his normal development.

Pedro and Santiago

Let us now study two children with similar problems that have also picked the same character: Pedro and Santiago are the only children in the sample whose parents are separated. None has a clear idea of the situation in the family and from the life history told by their mothers they appear as introverted and afraid of being alone. Pedro is a child who shows his aggression and suffers almost total loss of sight in one eye. Santiago's drawings and stories, on the other hand, show no signs of aggression.

Both pick Joe, a character from the Bonanza series, as their favorite character and identify themselves with him. Santiago likes everything about him, he wants to be like him even as a grown up, "to ride on horseback alone around the country", but does not refer to any aggressive character trait. Pedro also wants to be like him, yet he repeatedly points out his wish to be a "good shot" and talks about guns, shooting and fighting with pleasure.

The aggressive child thus chooses a character for those aspects, while the other prefers other behavioral traits. Pedro's eyesight problem no doubt is the reason for the great importance he attaches to being a good shot. Once again we see here the possible need of a masculine model being compensated whereas the interesting projection of a physical problem like the loss of eyesight is also observed.

Adriana and Mariela

Adriana and Mariela both seek "joy" on television. In the tests both girls present a satisfactory identification with their sex but have feelings of abandonment and isolation. Mariela does not even draw other family members, which is very unusual in a test, although understandable when knowing her parents' attitude towards her. She is left alone most of the day and expected to perform most household chores which are usually a mother's task.

Both Mariela and Adriana's parents have high school education and work outside the home. The choice of joyful characters becomes these girls' defense against sadness and anger. Mariela picks the female entertainer of children's programs (Xuxa) as the character she wants to be like when she grows up, so that she can be "joyful". Adriana chooses another children's program entertainer; she wants to be like her now and in the future "to be happier", "because she is always cheerful". They also choose cartoons because they make them laugh.

Special interest was given these two cases and Dr. Usandivaras was consulted. He commented on how the search for joy as a means of denial and compensation, by turning repressed aggression into kindness, acts as a defense mechanism against depression caused by intense feelings of abandonment. We see here a similar conflictive situation and the same defense mechanism: the search for joy as denial and compensation of the repression. Yet the characters expressing it and being identified with are quite different. Once again television appears to be acting as a compensatory mechanism that may also be thought of as an oniric function, a sort of daydreaming used to attain psychological balance.

María and Silvia

Let us now compare María and Silvia who chose the same character: a police woman. In her tests María shows signs of aggressive discharge, an adequate identification and some difficulties in her family ties (fantasies of being left out). She spends most of the day with her three brothers. As for her parents, they report that María plays and talks with her mother (she keeps nothing from her) but does not watch television with her, while the father watches in the evening and occasionally at noon.

Silvia shows clear signs of aggression in her tests, particularly in the oversized manly female figure. As for the relationship with her family there are signs of little communication. Silvia, unlike María, has a younger sister she is friendly and protective towards, though dominant. Her parents say that Silvia tends to become irritable, still they do not know what causes it, and that she does not discuss her affairs. If ever she discusses anything it is about family issues and she does it with her mother. Although Silvia is all day with her, there is no mention of sharing any activities either with her or with the father who comes for dinner. There is only mention of her relationship with the sister she plays and fights with, and whom she favors as company.

Let us see now why each of these girls choose as her favorite character the police woman. María picks her because she is "strong and powerful". She likes her because "she is always the best, she hides, stands for other people and always wins". María admits talking about police women and playing this with brothers and sisters (a game in which the boys are being persecuted). She feels identified with them: "I would like to be like them, because if anyone should attack my parents I could defend them. I can also jump and climb quite high. When I grow up I want to be like them, to be strong."

Instead Silvia chooses the police woman because she "goes into action; I would like to be like her in everything when I grow up... to save people...". At home with her sister she plays that she is a police woman and has powers. Strangely she chooses a program she is "not allowed to see but I see it anyway for I go to bed very late".

Both girls choose the same character to compensate for similar wants. María seeks to stand out and differentiate herself in a family group she feels excluded from (being excluded generates aggression). Thus, the search for a successful female figure combines channeled aggression (being a police woman) with recognition. Silvia, on the other hand, by identifying herself with the police woman seeks to get into action as an overreaction to a family that does not seem aware of her position in it.

Ricardo and Ana

A particular case is that of the twins, Ricardo and Ana, children of professional parents. The father is a psychiatrist and the mother a social worker though not working. The family gets together on weekends, holidays and Wednesday evenings.

Ricardo shows no sign of aggression in his tests. His sex identification is adequate and there does not seem to be any problems in his relation with his family (roles are well defined). He shares most of the time with both mother and sister, whom he plays, talks, and also fights with. His only fear is loneliness. He shares a bedroom with his sister and never watches television with his parents.

Ana, on the contrary, is dominant and protective of Ricardo. According to their parents, she prefers to imitate actions of strong women with powers. She seems to fear nothing and is quite an extrovert, affectionate and cheerful. Usually talkative, particularly with her mother, she sometimes watches television with her father.

Which are their television choices? Ricardo enjoys programs with "science fiction", as his parents also agree. His favorite character is Robocop because of all the things he can do, "though I wouldn't like to be like him at all". He discusses the making of films with his friends. He does not play this character or any other subject drawn from TV. Apparently television only provides him entertainment as the test data also confirm. As for Ana, she prefers Hunter's partner, a police woman, "because she likes it when she runs after someone". She wants to be like her both now and when she grows up; if she were like her she would run races and beat her. In this case we can appreciate how consistent with their personal characteristics and family ties the different use that the two children, of the same age and family, make of television. Ricardo seems well integrated in the family, showing no signs of aggression or lack of identity. Therefore television becomes a mere entertainment while, at the same, keeping its socializing function. Ana, instead, needs to discriminate herself from her twin brother and gain a position in her family. By identifying herself with a police woman she can, as a woman, gain recognition from her successful father and siblings, coming out as a winner before them.

This case is particularly interesting in that it presents two children within the same family environment, where the differentiation for television receptivity is given by emotional needs consistent with individual psychological processes.

Carmen and Verónica

We turn now to the case of Carmen and Verónica. The program chosen as favorite is *Pa*, a soap opera presenting the relationship of a widower with his three daughters. Carmen is a girl with signs of repressed aggression as a defense against the environment in her tests; she has an adequate identification but family problems (lack of communication, a feared paternal figure and a need to remain secluded from the family). She has two brothers, one older and one younger. The father is a university graduate with a hierarchical position at work. His mother, a housewife, has grammar school studies. The family gets together in the evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. Carmen spends most of the time with her mother and shows a dominant attitude toward her brothers. She is an extrovert and very sociable. "She likes to stay overnight at the houses of friends she hardly knows."

Verónica presents clear signs of aggression and repressed expansion, identity problems (confusion, she is embarrassed when it comes to feminine parts of her body), and highly dissociated family ties: a disqualified paternal figure and an omnipotent mother. Both her parents are professionals, he is a physician and she is a lawyer, "although I do not have a practice so that I can take care of the girls". She has a younger sister and her pregnancy reportedly cost her mother "blood, sweat and tears". It should be noted that this pregnancy followed a miscarriage. According to her mother, Veronica confides in her, she loves girls and is very tidy: "she washes her butt, she is a darling, feminine, her closet is unbelievable... nobody would say she is 9, she does not sit with her legs astride". The mother states she has been teaching her all this to bring her up as she was: respectful, feminine, having good manners and habits. When referring to the programs she watches, she says "we watch".

Let us compare the common choice made by these girls. Carmen chooses *Pa* because they are fun as a family, just as *Friends will be friends* and *The Simpsons*. She states watching television is her "favorite pastime" and she usually discusses "with cousins and friends what we watch." She rejects programs as *Zorro* and *Incredible Hulk* for "they are for men".

Verónica, instead, says she "adores *Pa*" and went to see the play. She constantly compares each character with her own family. She identifies herself with the daughters, who "sometimes get along with their Dad and sometimes don't". She wants to be like her mother: "she is like me, a woman" and adds "I want to be a doctor like my Dad".

The same program allows for different projections. For Carmen *Pa* stands as the ideal family: exciting, with a loving and rewarding father. This family compensates for her feelings of being left out and the lack of communication within her own family environment, the same feelings that make her wish to be permanently away from home. On the other hand, the program provides Verónica an important frame of reference regarding the father and the feminine roles. The father in *Pa* is a clear figure with a predominant position in the family as opposed to the disqualified image of her father. In this fictive family the mother is absent, making room for a somewhat different meeting space for both father and daughters – as opposed to the omnipotent role played by Verónica's mother that gives no chance for individualization. Obviously for both girls *Pa* stands as the ideal family, the one they dream of to compensate for the actual difficulties with their own.

Conclusion

From the comparisons of the projective tests run with children, from their answers on TV subjects, and from the life histories as told by parents, a clear association arises between character traits, seen in the psychological study, and what the child manifests about TV through language, games and particularly identification, or lack of it, with the characters portrayed in the media.

On the one hand, it might be said that the child uses and needs those "patterns", language, contents, etc., to communicate with his peers, by using the same television language, sharing experiences that, though not their own, are common to all of them. That is why we see some children who hardly watch television or talk about it at home, discussing the subject at school.

In this sense, TV can be said to act as an element of social leveling, since it conveys a unique message that may be shared by all, making children feel on an equal standing through the same shared knowledge they use to communicate. This is the most general aspect of the learning carried out by the child by means of television. It is also the shallowest, for the elements being used are incidental and the process takes place, unconsciously, without any manifest intention of learning. This subtle learning, by reading "between the lines", may affect speech, gestures, attitudes, general habits and in the long run, the culture.

Thus, we are concerned to see that there is no child whose intellectual, emotional and spiritual life is not directly affected by this television "sub-culture", competing to a greater or lesser extent with traditional socializing agents. Most children spend more time in the company of the television than at school or with their parents.

We can also talk about a deeper training carried out by television contents. This responds to the various psychological or personal needs of children who no longer draw from incidental aspects of the television subjects, but from actual characters they identify with to different extents. They want to be like them, today and in the future, that is, they are taken as life models.

These characters respond to different compensatory traits of their own personal complex of problems, favoring defense mechanisms of either denial or idealization before feelings of loneliness and anxiety, mishandled aggression or even physical problems. In this sense we can no longer speak of only grasping the television message but also, in certain cases, of a process of identification.

Identification is a selective process; it responds to deep personal needs and therefore it can be inferred that influence takes place to a much greater extent at an individual level. Emotions, basic needs for affection, are satisfied through daydreaming in front of the television.

As seen in these findings, children learn from television; they either use the message, the issues, the language or its style, and not only in their conversation but often in their games as well. It is their own common frame of reference conforming to a child subculture, both new and unknown to the adult at the same time.

Since children cannot possibly watch everything TV has to offer, whether for parental decision, lack of time, or whatever, it is interesting to observe how they manage to get to know, usually through friends, about the programs exclusively for adult audiences and off-limits for them. This is important because in a way it means everything on TV can enter into the children's world.

As for the deep internalization of television patterns (identification), the elements apparently accounting for this selective individual receptivity to a single TV message are those of needs, particularly when referring to the family.

All children with some kind of conflict in the family identify themselves with television characters. However, those children with a good relationship with their families do not and only use TV as the subject of conversation and games with their peers. Moreover, the closer a child is to what we may call normal or carefree, the more incidental and superficial the aspects he draws from TV, generally only to use them in his conversations.

Learning is carried out in two stages: imitation and identification. When beginning, learning comes through imitation; when faced with deeper wants, identification takes place. What goes on as this reality is imitated? Is it an open door to "magic thought"?

McLuhan (1987) states that TV conveys highly active and participant experience; the child is always actually the associate TV producer. The mosaic quality and the little information characteristic of image triggers a "warm" or "highly participative" effect. "Any information obtained must be completed by the observer". According to

McLuhan's hypothesis, children complete whatever television has to offer with their own reality.

Following the findings of the research work, it could be said that whenever reality is unsatisfactory, children complete it with elements they select and integrate from TV. This selection and integration of favorite characters and programs may serve as projective tests providing elements never available from any psychological test so far, for these may show their needs, but not the compensating mechanism appearing clearly in the use that children make of television.

It is important that we ask ourselves here which consequences may arise in children who are exposed to a programming whose only aim is consumption, lacking profound awareness of the formative and socializing role it fulfils.

The choice of programs reflecting a social reality

There is a trend in every research where age is taken into account with regard to program choices – the older the person the greater the selection of adult programs. It follows that children's preferences also change as they grow older: from those typically for children to more adult subjects. This apparently obvious relation was confirmed in the above-mentioned research work, when both variables were crossed regardless of children's social levels (see Table 1a).

After applying the statistical test of X^2, the result as a measure of significance was 189.8, a value which for a 5% risk level generously exceeds the value required to confirm the interdependence between studied variables.

The chart depicts clear trends: Interest in programs with themes for children, particularly cartoons, slowly decreases as viewers grow. This does not mean they do not watch them, only they do not prefer them. An interesting case is that of educational programs, that is, those designed to teach. Only 10% of all children chose them, a trend which rises up to the ages of 11 and 12.The trend reverses as the children become 13 and older.

If we take into account the characteristics of this group, as shown in the descriptive analysis, we see once more the close relation between reality as lived by the child and the use he makes of television. Naturally, programs dealing with adult issues are increasingly preferred as children get older, which is only natural since the real world is where they should learn to live. To adapt better, they are supposed to know about these realities.

Table 1a. Children's Program Preferences by Age

Program type	Age 7 - 8 (%)	9 - 10 (%)	11 - 12 (%)	13+ years (%)
Archetypes for children	45.68	43.82	37.50	35.43
	← — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
Archetypes for adults	8.62	17.59	31.07	35.43
	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — →
Cartoons	23.70	16.75	5.03	3.93
	← — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
Entertainment for children	17.67	12.01	7.63	7.08
	← — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
Soap operas	2.15	4.06	6.94	7.87
	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — →
Educational	0.43	4.06	6.25	2.36
	— — —	— — —	— →	← — — —
Journalistic	1.29	0.50	3.82	4.72
	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — →
Sports	0.43	1.18	1.73	3.14
	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — →
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

N=1,590

These trends are more clearly marked when regrouping the information:

Table 1b. Children's Program Preferences by Age (regrouped data chart)

Program type	Age 7 - 8 (%)	9 - 10 (%)	11 - 12 (%)	13+ years (%)
Children's programs	87.00	72.50	50.10	46.50
Programs for adults	10.80	21.70	38.10	43.30
Programs for public	2.20	5.80	11.80	10.20
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N=	232	591	576	127

To determine the statistical significance of the age/program relation, X^2 was again applied. The result 135.7 (critical independence value 12.59) shows a strong relation between the two variables.

Why do we want to stress such an obvious relation? Simply because when considering both variables and taking the children's different *social background* into account, the relation is no longer obvious. Once again, the social background stands as the clue for understanding both the relation and the influence that television has on children.

The most important findings from such an analysis are :

- As children get older the preference for children's programs decreases while there is a growing interest in adult issues. This relation was clearly proven statistically significant among children from the social levels A, B and C, that is, those living in a high and medium level socio-cultural environment.
- However, children at level D, that is, those living in slums, *conventillos* and orphan boarding schools, still prefer children's programs regardless of age.

These findings are absolutely consistent with the results of the case study which shows how children with problems of loneliness or abandonment turn strictly to children's programs. In other words, the deeper the problem or the greater the want, the more likely its resolution is sought through a more general or undefined compensation achieved through mechanisms we might call primary, such as the search for joy or regression. These children do not find a way out of their problems, not even through compensating mechanisms... they simply flee. Isn't this the same reason teenagers give for using drugs?

- This trend, marked and therefore easier to see in this group of children, is also found among children with serious problems regardless of their social status.

The same conclusion is reached by advertising professionals when using segmentations based on psychographic methods. Aiming at the most "vulnerable", they study vulnerability types based on more basic needs. Hard variables as sex, age, educational or economic level are no longer used when considering the population; the new research technologies group persons according to the so-called "soft variables", dealing precisely with deep private needs and wants.

Further results are:

- Children from the middle social levels show the greatest diversity of interests. This becomes evident in that they include as preferred choices or options everyone of thirteen program categories used in the study. Children from higher and lower levels chose only half the options.
- Younger children obviously have fewer interests, as observed in every group. Still, those from the middle class present the widest variety of program types as choices, that is, they are open to various possibilities.

- It is also remarkable that in the lowest social level group (D) younger children (7 and 8 years old) choose a comparatively higher percentage of adult programs, as compared with children from other levels.

Findings, as they build up and are analyzed with regard to the different aspects related to the development and adaptation of children, show how reality is projected into the selection and integration of television contents. They also show that this selection and integration will depend, from a psychological perspective, on the individual needs of the child, and from a sociological perspective on "soft variables", which allow a segmentation and grouping of children, youngsters and adults according to their needs or wants.

Television as a compensation for social wants

Findings obtained on an individual level are also valid for the different groups conforming to our society. The Vals or Risk segmentation used in publicity, where the population is grouped according to the so called "soft variables" or "the deepest and most powerful individual needs", is also valid when studying children in relation to the product "television".

To be honest with ourselves we will have to acknowledge that television programming is just a product, and children its potential consumers. This, at least, is a fact in most countries where there are no other criteria than the exclusively commercial one, when it comes to program selection. No matter in which light we choose to see it – some programs may aim higher than others, but if the rating is not high enough to compete with other broadcasting stations, the program is discontinued.

People's *needs* may be said to provide the stimuli ruling behavior and, by this means, they stand as the root of the functioning of both society and the culture.

The most outstanding and active of man's psychic needs is perhaps the emotional response to others. In a modern city, the individual finds reciprocal interaction easier in formal terms, without having to evoke emotional responses. In this situation his or her psychic need remains unsatisfied. S/he is actually caught in a feeling of loneliness and isolation, which is more depressing than genuine solitude, for we all know what it is like to be alone in a crowd. A person's need for favorable responses stands as the main stimulus for sociably acceptable behavior.

When our children and youngsters turn to television, they do not do so, as it is usually (and easily) said, for entertainment or information; rather they are desperately seeking to learn what they must *be* like to elicit a favorable response from others, and not to be alone. "Experience determines a subject's behavior. But this, in turn, derives from the contact with the environment in which he lives. Therefore, to understand both individual personality and *general personality*, it is indispensable to know the environment" (Ralph Linton).

If we limit our study to the number of hours a child or youngster spends daily before TV and the use they make of the contents in their conversations and games with their peers, we cannot but wonder if the "television environment" is the ruling environment in their lives.

Who do they "communicate" with most – their parents or the television? Who do they turn to when feeling lonely? And when they do not know how to behave to gain acceptance? Which are the never questioned and globally accepted ideal social models for identification?

The individual use of television by the child or the youngster can be generally applied to our society groups. This use is not restrained to the time lapsed between switching on and off the set; rather it dynamically permeates everyday reality.

When taking into account the prevailing psychic, affective and cultural needs in our child and teenage population, they are found to match similar trends in the use made of the television. No matter which program they draw the elements from in order to achieve social adaptation, what identifies them is the use of a common means, television, for attaining their ends.

Thus, groups with similar traits, for example, children or adolescents with problems of loneliness, abandonment and frustrations, will find on television the outlet for those situations they are unable to cope with by watching programs of a neat cut for children: cartoons or entertainment programs for children.

Others, with the possibility of getting out of a very low cultural and social level through their intellectual capacity, as shown in their school performance, spend the greater number of hours before the screen as compared with their social group. They claim they do so to learn... yet no one chooses didactic programs (Merlo-Flores, 1996a)!

There are also those with a poor identification with their parents. The *only* resource they turn to for models is television. Today, unlike in the past, no child will chose a teacher or an uncle as model. Whenever an adequate identification is lacking, the screen magically solves the situation by presenting heroes who never die, who everybody knows and accepts.

To find the clue to the interpretation of the television and child relationship process, children and adolescent populations must be considered as grouped according to their most imperious needs regarding their adaptation, development and, basically, their acceptance by others.

The paradox as a symptom

The great paradox is that at a time of overrated image, when being young, successful, blonde, beautiful, almost perfect, and when studies are followed to keep up with the Joneses, children and youngsters choose to view reality shows, violence, and issues where human misery is portrayed. Young people are trapped in a culture that fails to offer models, an essential element for adequate growth. Personality is conformed through a series of identifications. Young people stand as their own models, everyone wants to be young; young people are wanted in high positions, experience gained with age does not count as much as the vigor of youth. Being young is a value in itself, as if one could choose. Life phases seem all upset, young people have become models for adults.

A study I am working on with Michael Morgan from Massachussetts University, conveys interesting data regarding life models from a sample of 1,000 Argentine youngsters. We asked them who they wanted to look like and why. The most remarkable aspect is the extremely high level of dispersal; there are no common models for the young.

A 7% chooses one of the parents (3.3% the mother, 2.3% the father, 1.4% both parents) and a 6% talk about what I call sacrifice models, since they are dead, like Gandhi, Che Guevara, Eva Perón and Theresa from Calcutta. Most of the remaining choices fall, with very low percentages, on people from the media. What we may call life values are mentioned basically with regard to sacrificed models and parents. Is there worse violence than not being able to be oneself?

It is important to remark about the reasons why young people prefer programs containing violence. Most of the true deeper explanations belong to the unconscious level.

One phenomenon of the times that we cannot overlook is that life stories used to be told by the elderly, parents, teacher, priests; the young received information according to what their elders deemed convenient, respecting their phases. Today television is the indisputable narrator and its messages no longer respond to children's developmental phases, but to economic concerns of a group of adults.

The stories connect with the unconsious mind and the unconscious functions by means of primary associations. The tragedy, literature and cinema filled and still fulfils this narrative function but television is the indisputable "grandmother storyteller" of our age. The story has always filled the mission of showing, uniting and giving meaning to the internal contradictions of human personality.

Another fundamental element to take into account in this analysis is that we ought to approach television from an emotional standpoint, with our perceptions and feelings instead of rational logic – the image acts, in the psyche, as the nexus between sensory, perceptive, emotional and motor experiences, on the one hand, and language on the other.

Television has taken the lid off repression. The id, the long repressed dark side of the heart, is on the screen available to everyone. Television has pulled down a formerly insurmountable barrier behind which the dark side of human nature together with what had been veiled and repressed come into the open, the pendulum swinging to the opposite side.

Young people perceive the violence, envy, misery presented on the high rated programs as related to them, to their innermost being, they recognize themselves in it and get to know themselves from formerly forbidden angles – angles they never would have dared to mention or even surmise as their own. Commenting on one of the highest rated reality shows in Argentina, a 16 year old said to me: *"they show human misery, yet when I watch them I wonder how much of it is in me"*. How long is it since the word misery was used other than to denote material poverty? I had almost forgotten how true it is – misery dwells also in ourselves and in me. And I had to be reminded by a 16 year old adolescent! Word of restricted usage... misery.

This also accounts for the systematic rejection by most adults of *The Simpsons*. I would rather call it adult incapability to read it from the same angle as children and youngsters do. A young woman of 21 talking about *The Simpsons* in a focus group said "it's what happens to us every day, even our physiological needs that are so embarrassing to us, it's mixed feelings; and one feels uneasy watching this, yet at the same time, it is such a great relief".

At the 1995 Melbourne World Summit on Television and Children, 30 children held a full session acting very rational and committed. However, the last question was: "What program do you prefer?", and absolutely all of them chose *The Simpsons*. Leaving all logic behind, to enter the plane of emotions, Bart becomes the model for numerous children to the consequent teacher's and parent's horror. The younger children prefer him because he makes all the mistakes, because he is terrible, because we like him, because what happens to him also happens to us.

When the feelings conveyed by the screen are either too strong to be taken in, or cannot be related to experience, they become disturbing. For this reason children, when asked about programs that younger children should not watch, claim they cannot see them *for they cannot understand them*. They do not mean this from a rational perspective, for they are not talking about programs on politics or economics. Rather they mean they cannot assimilate from the emotional perception, they cannot put into words, they cannot relate to their own experiences.

If parents are asked, "What are they going to say?" they add. They are also aware of the great difficulty adults have in expressing their emotions.

These are the most common answers in a research work with a focus group methodology, which I am working on together with senior students from the University of Buenos Aires. We work with 150 children of ages 11 and 12 whom we asked to act as judges determining what younger children could and could not watch, justifying their decision.

In another focus group a 22-year-old said: "television contents are like triggers, sometime watching lesbians I can talk about things that otherwise I wouldn't have dared to... like my fears, my sexuality. It is like inner recognition, and this creates strong bindings because I can share what I really am inside..."

There is a great number of testimonies like these with young people who can explain the reasons for their choice of programs containing violence, sex, scandals, pornography, intimacy – as if youth were going through an path of inner search for identity from the darkest areas of their own nature. A difficult and lonely path, that adults should understand and accompany, because the big risk is their noticing only the dark side of human nature, believing that is all we are.

Listening to the little ones when demanding limits is just as important as helping them when faced with "what they cannot understand".

However, understanding youngsters and children and the use they make of violent television contents does by no means imply the justification of their broadcasting and production.

Epilogue

Obtaining knowledge, particularly of oneself, is one of the most arduous tasks man has to face to gain unity, and only by knowing himself can he establish deep ties with others. That is why television is used to make up for the biggest needs of man in this age: getting to know who he is, recovering his identity in a historical period when one is what one seems to be, and in the second place, to accomplish a deep interpersonal communication, when the consumption and materialistic culture drives us to communicate through possessing, through the memory numbing overdose of information, forgetting that the greatest need of a human person is to know himself in order to realize himself.

Note

1. Catharsis in the Aristotelian sense of the word, i. e. purification of strong emotion, as a result of involvement in the tragic drama.

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The UNESCO Global Study on Media Violence

Report Presented to the Director General of UNESCO[1]

Jo Groebel

Summary

This report presents the results of the UNESCO global study on media violence which was conducted between 1996 and 1997 as a joint research project by the World Organization of the Scout Movement and Utrecht University under the scientific supervision of Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel. It is the largest ever intercultural study on the role of media violence for children with a total of more than 5,000 pupils from 23 different countries all over the world participating.

The study is also unique in several other respects. For the first time, international crisis regions (war zones and high crime areas alike) were part of the research sample. Several of the countries which covered the whole global range of social and technological development had never before participated in an empirical social science study on media.

The methodology used was also unique in so far as all participating 12-year old children answered exactly the same standardized 60-items questionnaire which was translated into the different languages like, for example, Japanese, English, Russian, French, Arabian, etc. The content of the questions was not culture-bound, as otherwise a direct comparison of the data would have been impossible. The children reported their media behaviour, their habits, preferences, and social environment. By January 1998, app. 350,000 individual data had been collected and processed in the context of the study.

The following countries participated in the core study: Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, India, Japan, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, South Africa, Spain, Tadjikistan, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine. These countries represent the broad spectrum of hu-

man and technological development, and major world cultures, and thus reflect a representative range of countries as covered in the 1997 UNDP *Human Development Report*. In a next stage, additional countries will be part of an extension of the research program with countries like the United States, Russia, Finland, Poland, etc.

In each country, the data were collected in metropolitan and rural areas, in high- and low-aggression environments, from boys and girls, and from different types of schools. The only groups of children who could not be considered in the study were those who were not attending any school or living in extremely remote areas. However, even children who lived in refugee camps have been participating. The logistics and distribution of the questionnaires among average children were organized by members of the Scout Movement; the scientific supervision and analysis was conducted at Utrecht University.

Five major issues were addressed:

- Which role do the media, and in particular TV, play in the lives of children on a global level?
- Why are children fascinated by media violence?
- What is the relationship between media violence and aggressive behaviour among children?
- Are there cultural as well as gender differences in the media impact on aggression?
- How do violent environments (war/crime) on the one hand and the state of technological development on the other influence the coping with aggressive media content?

The results demonstrate:
93% of the children in this study have access to a TV-set. The range is 99% for the North-Western hemisphere to 83% for Africa with Asia and Latin-America in between. In the areas surveyed, the screen has practically become a universal medium. For schoolchildren, it is the most powerful source of information and entertainment. Even radio and books do not have the same global distribution.

The world's children spend an average of *3 hours daily in front of the screen* with of course a broad international spectrum of individual viewing behaviour. That is at least 50% more time spent with this medium than with any other out-of-school activity including home-work, being with family or friends, or reading.

Thus, *TV has become a major socialization factor and dominates the life of children in urban and electrified rural areas around the globe.*

In particular boys are fascinated by aggressive media heroes. *Some of these like Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator, have become global icons; 88% of the world's children know him.* 51% of the children from high-aggression environments (war; crime) would like to be like him as compared to 37% in the low-aggression neighbourhoods. Clearly, children need and use media heroes as role models to cope with difficult situations. And these are plentiful for the children of the world.

A remarkable large number live in a problematic emotional state. *Nearly half of the children report that they are anxious most of the time or often*; 9% had to flee their homesite at least once in their life; 47% report that they would like to live in another country. In the high-aggression areas, 16% of the children report that most people in their neighbourhood die because they are killed by others. Here, 7.5% of the children have already themselves used a weapon against someone.

In this situation, media heroes are used for escapism and compensation of the children's actual problems. For boys, it is primarily aggressive role models (30% name an action hero), for girls, pop stars and musicians. There are regional differences for the favourite heroes: Asia has the highest ranking for action heroes (34%), Africa the lowest (18%), with Europe and the Americas in between (25% each).

The children's world views are obviously influenced by actual as well as media experiences. Nearly one third of the aggression-environment group believe that most people in the world are evil as compared to a fifth in the low aggression group. A remarkable number of children from both groups report a strong overlap in what they perceive as reality and what they see on the screen (about 44%). *Many children are surrounded by an environment where "real" and media experiences both support the view that violence is natural.*

The impact of media violence can primarily be explained through the fact that aggressive behaviour is rewarded. 47% of those children who prefer aggressive media content would also like to be involved in a risky situation (as compared to 19% with another media preference). This holds again in particular for boys. In addition, nations with a high level of technological development reinforce the risk-seeking tendency. The broad spectrum of different available audio-visual communication means have increased the desire to permanently satisfy physiological stimulus needs which are triggered through aggressive media content.

All in all, one can conclude:

- Media violence is universal. It is primarily presented in a rewarding context.
- Depending on the personality characteristics of the children, and depending on their everyday-life experiences, media violence satisfies different needs: It "compensates" one's own frustrations and deficits in problem areas. It offers "thrills" for children in less problematic environments. For boys it creates a frame, of reference for "attractive role models".
- There are many cultural differences, and yet, the basic patterns of the media violence implications are similar around the world.
- Individual movies are not the problem. However, the extent and omnipresence of media violence (with an average of 5 to 10 aggressive acts per TV-program hour in many countries) contribute to the development of a global aggressive culture.
- The "normality" and the "reward characteristics" of aggression are more systematically promoted than non-aggressive ways of coping with one's life. Therefore, the risk of media violence prevails on a global level.

What can be done in this situation?
Violence has always been an element of fiction and news reporting. It can not be excluded from any media coverage. However, its extent, extremeness, and reward characteristics are the problem. Therefore, three major strategies should be considered on an international level:

- Public debate and "common ground" talks between *the five Ps*: Politicians, Producers, Pedagogy, Parents, and the future Prosumers (active consumers).
- The development of codes of conduct and self-control among media professionals.
- The establishment of media education to create competent and critical media users.

With communication systems like the Internet, the media will be even more omnipresent, universal, and global. The media bear "risks", as this study has demonstrated. But they also offer many new prosocial possibilities. As a consequence, the new digital environment demands similar attention as culture and education in the traditional world.

The problem

Children and adolescents have always been interested in arousing and often even violent stories and fairy-tales. With the occurrence of mass media, film and in particular television, however, the quantity of aggressive content daily consumed by these age groups has dramatically increased. As real violence, especially among the youth, at the same time is still growing, it seems plausible to correlate the two, media violence and aggressive behaviour. With more recent media developments, video recorders, computer games and the Internet one can see a further increase of extremely violent images which obviously find much attention. Videos present realistic torture scenes and even real murder, computer games enable the user to actively simulate the mutilation of "enemies", and the Internet has – apart from its prosocial possibilities – become a platform for child pornography, violent cults, and terrorist guidelines. Even with these phenomena, however, it is crucial to realize, that still the primary causes for aggressive behaviour will most probably be found in the family environment, the peer groups, and in particular the social and economic conditions children are raised in (Groebel & Hinde, 1991).

And yet, media play a major role in the development of cultural orientations, world views and beliefs, as well as in the global distribution of values and (often stereotyped) images. They are not only mirrors of cultural trends but can also channel them, and are themselves major constituents of society. Sometimes they are even direct means of inter-group violence and war propaganda. All in all, it is important to identify their contribution to the propagation of violence, if one considers possibilities of prevention. Thousands of studies have demonstrated the risk of media violence to stimulate aggression. Until now, however, no single study dealt with the problem on a global scale. In this situation UNESCO decided to initiate a project which should analyse the international importance of the issue. In particular, possible cultural differences, as well as the influence of different aggressive experiences in the actual environment (war and crime) and the different media available for the children were to be identified. To that end, an intercultural questionnaire study was developed. About 5,000 12-year old boys and girls from 23 different countries around the world have participated in the project. This means that this study is the biggest of its kind ever conducted with respect to the number of subjects and countries included. For at least half of the countries involved in this research study, it was the first time that a research of this type was undertaken.

The World Organization of the Scout Movement accepted overall responsibility for the field work of the study, including the organization of international logistics, training of people responsible, questionnaire distribution, and data collecting procedure. The scientific supervision, data processing, and integration of the study was done by Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel of Utrecht University. Statistics were supplied by Willem van Leerdam of Tangram. The University of Utrecht offered overhead support through its stimulation fund. Jean Cassaigneau and Mateo Jover of the World Scout Bureau supervised most of the logistics and contributed to the methodology. We thank all the national contributors and supporters of the study, in particular the National Scout Organizations involved, their officials and leaders, teachers and parents, and not least, the thousands of students who participated in the project all over the world.

The media

With the technical means of automatization and, more recently of digitalization, *any media content has potentially become global.* Not only do individual news reach nearly any part of the world, also mass entertainment has become an international enterprise. E.g., American or Indian movies can be watched in most world regions. Much of what is presented contains violence. In high literature art as well as in popular culture it has always been a major topic of human communication. Whether it is the Gilgamesh, a Shakespearean drama, the Shuihu zhuan of Luo Guanzhong, Kurosawa's Ran, stories of Wole Soyinka, or ordinary detective series, man seemed always to be fascinated by aggression. This fascination does not necessarily mean that destructive behaviour is innate; however, it draws attention as it is one of the phenomena of human life which cannot be immediately explained and yet demands consideration of how to cope with it if it occurs. Nearly all studies around the world show that men are much more attracted to violence than women. One can assume that, in a mixture of biological predispositions and gender role socializations, men often experience aggression as rewarding. It fits with their role in society but may once also have served the motivation to seek adventure when exploring new territory or protecting the family and the group. Without an internal (physiological thrill seeking) and an external (status and mating) reward mechanism men may rather have fled leaving theirs unprotected. But apart from "functional" aggression humankind has developed "destructive" aggression, mass-murder, hedonistic torture, humiliation, which cannot be explained in terms of survival. It is often these, which are widely distributed in the media.

The media themselves differ in their impact. Audio-visual media in particular are more graphic in their depiction of violence than books or newspapers; they leave less freedom in the individual images which the viewers associate with the stories. As the media become ever more perfect with the introduction of three dimensions (virtual reality) and interactivity (computer games and multimedia) and as they are always accessible and universal (video and Internet) *the representation of violence "merges" increasingly with reality.*

Another crucial distinction is that between "context-rich" and "context-free" depiction of violence. Novels or sophisticated movies usually offer a story around the occurrence of violence: What is its background, what are its consequences? Violence as a pure entertainment product, however, often lacks any embedding in a context which is more than a clichéed image of good and bad. The final difference between the individual media forms has to do with their distribution. A theatre play or a novel are nearly always singular events, the modern mass media, however, create a time- and space-omnipresence.

Even here, a distinction between problematic and non-problematic forms of media violence has to be made. A news program or a TV documentary which present the cruelty of war and the suffering of its victims in a non-voyeuristic way are part of objective investigation or may even serve conflict-reduction purposes. Hate campaigns, on the other hand, or the glorification of violence stress the "reward" characteristics of extreme aggression. In general, one can roughly distinguish between three different modes of media content: purely investigative (typically news), message oriented (campaigns, advertisement), and entertainment (movies, shows). For any of these, one can distinguish between problematic and non-problematic forms:

Mode: *investigation*
message
entertainment

Problematic: voyeurism
censorship
dehumanizing propaganda
rewarded violence

Non-problematic: classical journalism
anti-violence campaigns
story thrills

Although often these criteria may not be easy to determine, there are clear examples for each of the different forms: Reality TV or paparazzi activities may have to do with the truth but they also, in the extreme, influence this very truth through their own behaviour – see the discussion surrounding Princess Diana's death. Through the informal communication patterns on the Internet also rumours have become part of "serious" news-reporting, as the discussion around the American president in January

1998 has shown. Whether true or not, deviant groups and cults can influence the global information streams more efficiently than ever before. The cases of Serbia and Rwanda on the other hand has demonstrated the role which "traditional" mass propaganda through the radio still can play in genocide. Many incidents around the world finally indicate that children often lack the capacity to distinguish between reality and fiction and take for granted what they see in entertainment films stimulating their own aggression. If they are permanently exposed to messages which promote that violence is fun or is adequate to solve problems and gain status, then the risk that they learn respective attitudes and behaviour patterns is very high.

Theories and research studies

General theoretical background

Many scientific theories and studies have dealt with the problem of media violence since the beginning of the 20th century. Most of them originate in North-America, Australia/New Zealand or Western-Europe. But increasingly, Asia, Latin-America and Africa are contributing to the scientific debate. The most influential studies are briefly presented. They cover a broad range of different paradigms: cultural studies, content analyses of media programs, behavioural research. However, the terms aggression and violence are exclusively defined here in terms of behaviour which leads to harm of another person. For phenomena, where activity and creativity have positive consequences for those involved, other terms are used. Recently, scientists have overcome their traditional dissent and have come to some common conclusions. They assume a media effects risk which depends on the message content, the characteristics of the media user, and his family, as well as his social and cultural environment. All in all, children are more at risk to be immediately influenced than adults. But certain effects, like habituation, also hold for older age groups. While short-term effects may be described in terms of simple causal relationships, the long-term impact is more adequately described as an interactive process which involves many different factors and conditions. Yet, as the commercial and the political world strongly rely on the influence of images and messages (as seen in the billion dollar turnover of the advertising industry or the important role of media in politics), it seems naive to exclude media violence from any effects probability.

The most influential theory on this matter is probably the *social learning approach* by Albert Bandura and his colleagues. As much of what people learn happens through observation in their immediate environment it can be concluded that similar processes work through the media. Many studies have demonstrated that children especially either directly imitate what they see on the screen or they integrate the observed behaviour patterns into their own repertoire. An extension of this theory considers the role of cognitions. If I see that a certain behaviour, e.g., an aggressive one, is successful, I believe that the same is true for my own life. Groebel & Gleich (1993) and Donnerstein (*National Television Violence Study,* 1997) both show in European and US-American studies that nearly 75% of the aggressive acts depicted on the screen remain without any negative consequences for the "aggressor" in the movie or are even rewarded.

The so-called *script theory*, among others, propagated by Rowell Huesmann and Leonard Eron, assumes the development of complex world views ("scripts") through media influence. If I over-estimate the probability of violence in real life (e.g., through its frequency on the TV-screen), I develop a belief-system where violence is a normal and adequate part of modern society.

The role of the personal state of the viewer is stressed in the *frustration-aggression-hypothesis* (see Leonard Berkowitz). Viewers who have been frustrated in their actual environment, e.g., through having been punished, insulted, or physically deprived, "read" the media violence as a signal to channel their frustration into aggression. This theory would explain why in particular children in social problem areas are open to media-aggression effects.

The contrary tendency has been assumed in the *catharsis-theory*, and later the *inhibition-theory* by Seymour Feshbach. As in the Greek tragedy, aggressive moods would be reduced through the observation of similar states with others (substitute coping). Inhibition would occur when the stimulation of own aggressive tendencies would lead to (learned) fear of punishment and thus contribute to its reduction. While both approaches may still be valid under certain circumstances, they have not been confirmed in the majority of studies, and their original author, Feshbach, now also assumes a negative effects risk.

A lot of the fascination of media violence has to do with physiological arousal. The action scenes, which are usually part of media violence, grab the viewer's attention and create an at least slight "kick", more probably among males. At the same time, people tend to react more aggressively in a state of arousal. This would again explain why arousing TV scenes would lead to higher aggression among frustrated/angered viewers, as Dolf Zillmann explains in his *excitation-transfer theory*. In this context it is not the content but the formal features, sound and visual effects that would be responsible for the result.

Among others, Edward Donnerstein, Neil Malamuth, and Donald Linz have investigated the effect of *long-term exposition* to extremely violent images. Men in particular get used to frequent bloody scenes; their empathy towards aggression victims is reduced.

The impact of media violence on anxiety has also been analyzed. George Gerbner and Jo Groebel both have demonstrated in longitudinal studies that the frequent depiction of the world as threatening and dangerous leads to more fearsome and cautious attitudes towards the actual environment. As soon as people are already afraid or lack contrary experiences they develop an *anxious world view* and have difficulties in distinguishing between *reality-and-fiction*.

Cultural studies have discussed the role of the cultural construction of meaning. The decoding and interpretation of an image depends on traditions and conventions. This could explain why an aggressive picture may be "read" differently, e.g., in Singapore than in Switzerland, or even within a national culture by different groups. These cultural differences have definitely to be taken into account. Yet, the question is, whether certain images can also immediately create emotional reactions on a fundamental (not culture-bound) level and to what extent the international mass media have developed a more homogeneous (culture-overspanning) visual language.

Increasingly, theories from a non-Anglosaxon background have offered important contributions to the discussion. In Paris, a UNESCO-sponsored congress was held in 1997 chaired by E. Auclaire where many of these approaches, including Psychoanalysis and Psychiatry, were presented. This event continued a series of meetings which had been started in Lund in 1995, where the global platform on media violence had led to the creation of the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, with headquarters in Göteborg (and probably Utrecht; see the reports of Nils Gunnar Nilsson).

The compass theory

As basis for the UNESCO study, Jo Groebel has formulated the *compass theory*. Depending on already existing experiences, social control, and the cultural environment, media content offers an orientation, a frame of reference which determines the direction of one's own behaviour. Viewers do not necessarily adapt simultaneously what they have observed, but they measure their own behaviour in terms of distance to the perceived media models. If extreme cruelty is "common", "just" kicking the other seems to be innocent by comparison if the cultural environment has not established a working alternative frame of reference (e.g., social control; values).

In general, the impact of media violence depends on several conditions: media content – roughly 10 acts of violence per hour in the average programming (see the recent US *National Television Violence Study*, 1997); media frequency; culture and actual situation; and the characteristics of the viewer and his family surrounding. Yet, as the media now are a mass phenomenon, the probability of a problematic combination of these conditions is high. This is demonstrated in many studies. Based on scientific evidence, one can conclude: The risk of media violence prevails.

Method and design of the UNESCO study

A study which is to be conducted in different countries and cultures faces several problems: The logistics are difficult; many countries do not have scientific faculties that could run the study there; the cultures are so different that not only language problems but also differences in the social meaning of terms appear. Therefore the authors of this project chose a standardized procedure.

All logistics were centrally organized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement from their Geneva headquarters. The organization used their international network of National Scout Organizations to conduct the study in the respective countries. To that end, two officers of the Scout Movement travelled to the countries in the sample (see below) and instructed their local representatives in how to apply the procedure. In addition, the World Scout Organization took care of the translations into the different national languages and the necessary pretests in each country. The advantage of the Scout Movement, apart from its logistics, is its strict political and ideological independence. Thus, no intended or unintended interference based on a certain belief system was to be expected.

Although language and meaning are always culture-bound we chose a questionnaire-procedure to analyze the relationship between media preferences and aggression. By applying exactly the same questions all over the world a maximum comparison was possible. As we limited the items to descriptive, preference and behavioural data, excluding evaluations and performance measures, we assume a relatively culture-independent measurement. Of course, systematic differences in preferences are indicators of cultural specifics. That was exactly what we wanted to measure. The reliability and the validity of the data are not reduced through that approach. The regional pre-tests demonstrated that all children could comprehend the questionnaire which they had to fill in during classes and that all items were meaningful to them. Of course, without financial and time constraints, an even better pre-testing would have been possible. However, the *a posteriori* analyses confirmed the quality of the work.

The questionnaire itself consisted of a mixture of text-questions with mostly multiple-choice answers and very simple (again, culture-free) sketches which depicted a number of social situations. The children then had to choose between several options, e.g., an aggressive or a peaceful solution to a depicted conflict. Several factors were investigated: the children's demographics, their social and family situation, media use and preferences, level of aggression in their environment, their own aggressive tendencies, level of anxiety, and their perception of values and orientations. All in all, about 60 different variables were included.

The sample for the study consisted of an original core group of 23 different countries around the world, where, depending on country-size, between 150 and 600 12-year old school children (boys and girls) were to be investigated respectively. The countries were selected to represent different regions and social development structures, cultures, and economic and social circumstances. After finishing the remaining core data, roughly 5,000 international 12-year-olds contributed to the project. The participating countries are: Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, India, Japan, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, South Africa, Spain, Tadjikistan, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine.

In addition to the core-group, an even broader "control group" of countries was organized by the scientists from Utrecht University. With this additional group, including Austria, Russia, the USA, and most probably France, Great Britain, Sweden, and Poland, a link with already existing national research shall be established.

A quota-sample was used, which considered three criteria: gender, rural versus metropolitan environment, high versus low level of aggression in the students' actual environment. With the last two, the sample was systematically structured. Gender was assumed to be equally distributed across the schools. In addition, the types of school were nationally chosen to represent the respective school systems.

The age was fixed at 12 years in order to standardize possible developmental effects. Many studies have dealt with age differences, and the age of twelve seems to be a period where the interest in media is particularly high; at the same time children are still in the process of socialization. 12 years is the age where they start to become adolescents and are particularly interested in adult role models and respective media images. Of course, "psychological age" and maturity may differ interculturally but still fundamental developmental stages are valid across cultures, as many studies have shown. In any case, we decided to standardize the age factor.

The gathering of the data started in the fall of 1996 and finished with this report in September 1997. Thus, it is not only one of the largest, but also one of the most actual and "fastest" media-effects projects ever conducted.

The results

About 350,000 individual data were obtained and processed (more than 5,000 students with more than 60 variables each). In the first step, simple analyses were applied, in order to get a general overview of the demographics, the global media use, and the state of violence among children around the world. In addition, first indicators of the correlation between media use and individual aggression were obtained. In this stage, most results are based on frequency-and percentage-tables plus a few cross-tabulations. More sophisticated analyses will be featured in a later stage (for the experts: including structural analyses and multivariate models).

The demographics

Global statistics:
2,788 boys and 2,353 girls participated in this stage of the study; all were 12 years old. Boys (54.1%) are thus slightly over-represented compared to girls (45.6%). However, this was intended as we regarded boys as the bigger risk group.

About 80% of the children live with both parents; 13% only with their mother, 2.5% with their father. The remaining live with relatives, in orphanages, or alone. 49% live in a big city, 28% in a small town, 20% in little villages, and the remaining 3% in camps or single houses. The majority of children have fathers who work as employees; 10% do not know their father's profession (as they may not know him). About 9% of the children already have experienced fleeing a country. Nearly 40% of the mothers around the globe take care of the household as their primary profession. Most children live in small to medium-size families either alone with their parents or with just one or two more brothers or sisters (about 90%). About one third of the children were rated (by the local Scout representatives) to live in an aggressive environment or to face problems. The originally proposed 50% match could not be reached as several countries seem to have hardly any such area, which could be easily identified.

Regional differences:
In this stage of the study, we concentrated on four "regions", not the individual countries: Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe/Canada, Latin-America. By doing so, we brought

together areas which between themselves may differ immensely. We "merged" Europe and Canada as we assume some common cultural basis. This, of course, is also partly true for Europe and Latin-America. However, for Latin-America there were sufficient numbers of countries to form their own cluster. In any case, this clustering was not more than a first testing of rough cultural differences or overlaps. Some results: Africa has the fewest children of our sample which live together with both parents (app. 72%), Asia the most (88%). Latin-America (75%) and Europe/Canada (83%) are in between. Asia has the most children living in big cities (56%), Europe/Canada (43%) the least. Africa has the most refugees (12%), Latin-America the least (4%).

Not all of these numbers may fit with an objective global count, but some regions were not accessible at all; we also could only investigate children who were able to read. Yet, for the purpose of the study the data seem to be sufficiently valid.

A remarkable difference showed with respect to the mother's profession: While in Latin-America 51% and in Asia 55% of the mothers were reported to take care (exclusively) of the household, the numbers for Europe/Canada are 33% and for Africa 9.9%. For different reasons, most mothers in these two regions also work in other positions (take care of everything; are employed).

All in all, the country selection represented the complete UNDP-index range.

Media use

Global statistics:

97% of the school areas in our sample can be reached at least by one TV broadcast channel. For most areas the average is four to nine channels (34%). 5% receive one, 3% two, 9% three channels, 11% ten to twenty, and 18% more than twenty channels. The percentages are minimum values, as 17% did not answer this question.

91% of the children in our global sample have access to a TV set, primarily at home. Thus, the screen has become a universal medium around the world. Whether it is the *favelas*, a South Pacific island, or a skyscraper in Asia, television is omnipresent, even if we consider that we did not cover some regions where TV is not available at all. This result justifies the assumption that it still is the most powerful source of information and entertainment outside face-to-face communication. This is confirmed by further statistics. Even radio and books do not have the same distribution (91%, 92%).

All other media follow with some distance: newspaper 85%; tape recorder (e.g. cassette) 75%; comics 66%; video recorder 47%; video games (like "gameboy") 40%; PC 23%; Internet 9%.

The children could report how much time they spend with several favourite activities. The children spent an average of *3 hours daily in front of the screen.* That is at least 50% more time spent with this medium than with any other activity including home work (2 hours), helping the family (1.6 hours), playing outside (1.5 hours), being with friends (1.4 hours), reading (1.1 hours), listening to the radio (1.1 hours), to tapes/CDs (0.9 hours), or using the computer (0.4 hours, for whom it applies).

Thus, TV dominates the life of the children around the globe.

Regional differences:
Europe/Canada have the highest distribution of TV (nearly 99%), Africa the lowest (83%). Actually in our study the distribution of TV may be over-represented for Africa, as we did not consider non-school groups or areas without any electricity available. Latin-America comes a close second after Europe/Canada (97%), Asia has 92%. The order is roughly the same with most other audio-visual media, like video, PC, games - see the numbers under global statistics above. Radio plays still an important role in Africa; here the percentage is similar to Europe/Canada and Latin-America (app. 91%), and slightly higher than in Asia (88%).

Orientations and values

Global statistics:
The emotional states, as well as their ideals are important factors which moderate how children cope with their environment and how they evaluate what they observe in the media. Of course, the media themselves can influence these states and norms.

What is the general emotional state of the children? About two thirds report that they are happy most of the time. About one fourth know the feeling, but do not regularly experience it, and about 2.5% say that they are never happy. There is no difference between boys and girls. Nearly half of the children are anxious most of the time or often, with again no difference between boys and girls. About 47% of the children report that they would like to live in another country (either for adventure or for escapism reasons).

Although the majority of the children are relatively happy, a remarkable number live in a problematic emotional state.

What kind of persons are perceived as role models by the children? They could give a name which then was ordered along a list of different characteristics. The results again demonstrate the importance of the media.

Most children (26%) name an action hero, followed by pop stars and musicians (18.5%). However, there are important gender differences. 30% of the boys mention an action hero, as compared to 21% of the girls. But even for the female group this character comes second after pop stars/musicians (girls: 27%, boys: 12%).

Other personalities play a less important role: About 8% name a religious leader, 7% a military leader (boys: 9%, girls: 3.4%), 6% a philosopher/scientist, 5% a journalist, and only 3% a politician. The remaining are personal acquaintances or have other roles.

This confirms the global trend: Action heroes and pop stars are the favourite role models among children.

Nevertheless, religious beliefs are still widely spread: About 90% of the children report that they believe in (a) God.

What are the personal values of the children? 40% report that their favourite wish is to have a family, because they either live in a functioning parent-child relationship or because they lack it but would like to have it. For 10% enough food is the favourite. This may mean that this group regularly experiences food-deprivation. For 25% of the boys the favourite wish is always to be a winner, 19% of the girls say the same.

Regional differences:
The emotional states seem to differ somewhat between the world regions. While happiness is more or less equally distributed (with Latin-America being a little "happier" than Africa, Europe/Canada, and Asia, in that order), remarkable differences occur when it comes to being anxious. Around 50% of the children in Africa, Latin-America, or Asia are (very) often anxious as compared to about 36% in Europe/Canada.

There are regional differences between the favourite heroes: Asia has the highest ranking for action heroes (34%), Africa the lowest (18%), with Latin-America and Europe/Canada in between (25% each). This may have to do with the significantly lower saturation of audio-visual media in Africa, but may also have other cultural reasons.

However, there is a clear correlation between the presence of TV and reporting action heroes as favourites.

The favourites in Africa are pop stars/musicians (24%) with Asia the lowest (12%). Africa has also high rankings for religious leaders (18%), as compared to Europe/Canada (2%), Latin-America (6%), and Asia (6%). Military leaders score highest in Asia (9.6%), and lowest in Europe/Canada (2.6%). Journalists score well in Europe/Canada (10%), low in Latin-America (2%). Politicians rank lowest in Europe (1%), highest in Africa (7%).

Again, there may be a correlation with the distribution of mass media: the more TV, the higher the rank of media personalities, and the lower the traditional ones (politicians, religious leaders). In Europe/Canada, journalists get ten times as many votes as politicians.

There is a strong correlation between the accessibility of modern media and the predominant values and orientations.

Violence and aggression

Global statistics:
As reported, roughly one third of the children in our sample live in a high-aggression environment or problematic neighbourhood. This ranks from high-crime areas over recent-war zones and (refugee) camps to economically poor environments which of course do not have to be aggressive per se. Yet, in these areas, more than twice as many people seem to die of being killed by others than in the low-problem neighbourhoods (children's reports: 16% versus 7%).

Again, twice as many children there are member of an armed gang (5.2%) as compared to the low-aggression areas (2.6%). They report more personal enemies (9% versus 5.9%) and regard attacking more often as fun than the children from the low-aggression neighbourhoods (8% versus 4.7%). They also have used weapons more often against someone (7.5% versus 5.5%). Thus, it comes as no surprise, that they are also more anxious (most of the time: 25% versus 19%), and would like to live in another country (53% versus 46%). But they also report a similar happiness as the low-aggression group. However, their world view is obviously influenced by their experience: Nearly one third of the aggression-environment group believe that most people in the world are evil (compared to slightly more than a fifth of the low-aggression-area group).

The pattern is clear and plausible: In high problem areas, children do not only experience more aggressive behaviour, they are also emotionally and cognitively affected: more hedonistic violence, more anxiety, a more pessimistic world view.

Regional differences:
Different forms of aggression are evaluated differently in the cultures of the world. We wanted to know whether a physical attack or a verbal insult is perceived as more "damaging". The results confirm the cultural differences: In Europe and Canada, children regard a physical attack with fists as worse (55.5%) than being given insulting names (44%). In Asia, the opposite is the case: for nearly 70%, verbal insults are worse than physical attacks (29%). Africa is similar to Asia (verbal: 63%, physical: 35%). Latin-America is balanced (50% each).

In different situations, where is the highest probability of aggressive reactions to be found? We presented a number of simple sketches which showed a variety of social situations: A verbal conflict, a physical attack, a recorder damaged by another child, a stereo which a child urgently wanted to have, a group of people hanging around. For each of these situations, the children should say how the involved persons would react, and what they themselves would do in a similar situation.

In situations of social conflict, children in Africa reported most frequently that they would regard physical attacks as adequate reaction: e.g., 32% hitting the other as reaction to verbal insult (Asia 15%, Latin-America 14%, Europe/Canada 16%); 9% even reported shooting the other as adequate. Nearly one third in Africa reported, that a group of people hanging around would attack another group as next action (Asia 28%, Europe/Canada 20%, Latin-America 19%).

At the same time, children in Africa experience having a gun as a powerful feeling more often than in the other regions (25%; Latin-America 18%; Europe/Canada 18%; Asia 10%). They also report that they themselves have a gun more often (4.5%; Latin-America 3.5%; Asia 3.3%; Europe/Canada 2.4%). In general, children in Africa and Asia have twice as often used a weapon against someone (7.1%; 8.3%) as those in Latin-America and Europe/Canada (4.4%; 3.6%).

All in all, the children's aggressive behaviour patterns and perceptions are a mirror of what they experience in their real environment: frustration, aggression, problematic circumstances.

However, to what extent do the media contribute to these patterns? To what extent do they channel the already existing aggressive predispositions?

Media violence

Most studies show that the relation between media violence and "real" violence is interactive: Media can contribute to an aggressive culture; people who are already aggressive use the media as further confirmation of their beliefs and attitudes, which, in turn, are reinforced through media content. This interaction is especially true for long-term developments. At this stage of the study, we can offer some correlations between media and "real" violence. A one-directional effect cannot be assumed on the global level and could also not be empirically tested. The study focuses on the role of the media in the complex culture of violence beside other influences.

A major question is, whether children are able to distinguish between reality and fiction. Another one deals with the perception that media and everyday-experiences are similar. We compared the children from the high- and the low-aggression environments and asked them whether what they saw in the media resembled their own experiences.

In all cases, the high-aggression-area group reported a stronger overlap between reality and fiction than the low-aggression-area group (movies: 46% versus 40%; TV: 72% versus 69%; radio: 52% versus 48%; comics: 26% versus 22%; all in all not an extreme, but homogeneous trend). Thus, they are more probably confronted with similar aggressive messages in their actual environment and in the media with a higher probability than children from a less-violent neighbourhood. Obviously, media content reinforces the already mentioned belief that most people are evil.

Many children are surrounded by an environment where "real" and media experiences both support the view that violence is natural.

The fascination of violence is often related to strong characters who can control their environment, are (in the end) rewarded for their aggression, and can cope with nearly every problem. The message is at least threefold: Aggression is a good means to solve conflicts; aggression offers status; aggression can be fun. The larger-than-life hero of course is an old theme of art and literature. It serves both needs, the compensation of one's own deficits, and the reference point for one's own behaviour. Relatively new, however, is the global uniformity of such heroes through the mass media and their commercial weight.

One such media figure is the *Terminator* character from two movies of the same name, starring the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Our results confirm that *Terminator* is a cross-cultural hero. About 88% of the world children population (if our sample is representative) know him.

In the comparison between high- and low-aggression areas it is remarkable that 51% of the children of the high-aggression environment would like to be like him as compared to 37% in the low-aggression neighbourhoods. He seems to represent the characteristics which children think are necessary to cope with difficult situations.

Equally successful are heroes like *Rambo*, and of course "local" heroes from the respective domestic media markets, e.g., India, Brazil, or Japan.

An aggressive media hero is particularly "successful" as role model in the high-aggression areas of the world. Some of these heroes have become culture-overspanning icons.

Are there any systematic patterns in the aggressive cognitions which link personal motives, actual environment, and media content? We analyzed the correlation between different forms of "sensation seeking" (the motive to be thrilled through risk and adventure), a relatively stable personality characteristic, on the one hand, and different actual and media environments on the other.

There was no difference in sensation seeking in the high- and the low-aggression environment. That is plausible, as this personality characteristic is assumed to be highly genetically determined, thus relatively free of environmental influences. However, when we split up the sample into a group with a comparatively well developed technological infrastructure and one with a less well developed one (criterion: distribution of computers, then "median"-split = 50% high/low dichotomy), the picture changed. Twice as many children in the "high technology"-group as in the "low technology"-group reported a risk-seeking tendency (20% versus 10%).

In terms of regions, Africa has by far the lowest (7.3%), Europe/Canada (18.9%) the highest scores, with Asia (18.5%), and Latin-America (15.9%) following close.

This may have to do with two aspects:

a) the sensory stimulation is probably higher in high-technology environments; it thus creates a generally higher state of permanent arousal;

b) with a higher availability of media programming, the risk-seeking tendency is modelled into uniform patterns which mirror the content of the media (e.g., the car chase as a movie icon).

To test the latter, we linked the sensation-seeking tendency in an additional analysis with the preference for media content. The picture is clear. Children, and in particular boys, with a risk seeking tendency have a higher preference for aggressive media content than those who lack this tendency (boys: 40% versus 29%). When asked, whether they would themselves want to be involved in an aggressive situation, the tendency was even stronger: 47% of those who prefer aggressive media content would also like to be involved themselves in a risky situation (as compared to an average of 19% with other media preferences, range: 15%-23%). In the recent analysis, this result comes closest to a direct effects measure:

There is a link between the preference for media violence and the need to be involved in aggression oneself.

The overall result can be interpreted as follows:
The *tendency* of sensation-seeking is possibly genetically determined (with an extremely strong gender influence: 25% of the boys, but only 4% of the girls report risk-seeking!). The level and direction of this tendency, however, is moderated through the environment. When violence is presented as "thrilling" in the daily media environment, this reinforces the "reward characteristics" of the respective behaviour. When children actually experience violence in their immediate environment, the hedonistic value of "heroism" makes place for its "survival"-value (see the action hero-results).

Thus, depending on the "real" environment, media violence can serve different functions. Nevertheless, in both cases it confirms the "reward"-characteristics of aggressive behaviour.

Conclusions and recommendations

At this stage, we can summarize the role of the media in the perception and application of aggression as follows:

Media violence is universal. It is primarily presented in a rewarding context. Depending on the personality characteristics of the children, and depending on their everyday-life experiences, media violence satisfies different needs: It "compensates" own frustrations and deficits in problem-areas. It offers "thrills" for children in a less problematic environment. For boys, it creates a frame of reference for "attractive role-models". There are many cultural differences, and yet, the basic patterns of the media violence implications are similar around the world. Individual movies are not the problem. However, the extent and omnipresence of media violence contributes to the development of a global aggressive culture. The "reward-characteristics" of aggression are more systematically promoted than non-aggressive ways of coping with one's life. Therefore, the risk of media violence prevails.

The results demonstrate the omnipresence of TV in all areas of the world. Most children around the globe seem to spend most of their time with the medium. What they get is a high portion of violent content. Combined with the real violence, which many children experience, the probability is high that aggressive orientations are promoted rather than peaceful ones. But also in lower-aggression areas, violent media content is presented in a rewarding context. Although children cope differently with this content in different cultures, the transcultural communality of the problem is the fact that aggression is interpreted as a good problem-solver for a variety of situations.

Children want a functioning social and family environment. As they often seem to lack these, they seek role models which offer compensation through power and aggression. This explains the universal success of movie characters like *Terminator*. Individual preferences for films like this one are not the problem. However, when violent content becomes a common phenomenon up to the occurrence of an aggressive media environment, the probability that children develop a new frame of reference, and that problematic predispositions are channelled into destructive attitudes and behaviour increases immensely.

What are possible solutions? Probably more important than the media are the social and economic conditions in which children grow up. However, the media as constituents of cultures, beliefs, and orientations also deserve much attention. Centralized control and censorship are not efficient and do not meet the criteria of democratic societies. Three major strategies should be considered:

- Public debate and "common ground" talks between politicians, producers, and teachers.
- The development of professional codes-of-conduct and self-discipline for producers.
- Innovative forms of media education to create competent and critical media users.

Apart from media professionals non-governmental organizations in general and non-formal educational agents with a global perspective such as Scouting can play an important role in this respect.

With communication systems like the Internet, the media will be even more omnipresent and universal. As a consequence, the new digital environment demands similar attention as culture and education in the traditional world.

Note

1. The study is a joint project of UNESCO, The World Organization of the Scout Movement and Utrecht University. This report was presented by Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel to UNESCO on February, 19, 1998.

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Children's Media Situation

Research Articles

Children's Voice in the Media

A Study of Children's Television Programmes in Asia

ANURA GOONASEKERA

I like what I get is the same thing as I get what I like.[1]

Most mass media programmes are not produced with children's interest in mind. Like other commercial commodities these are produced for profit in the market place. However it is sometimes asserted that the market place provides the people with what they like to get. The quotation, from *Alice in Wonderland,* cited above is a reminder to us that things are not as simple as that.

In most Asian countries children under the age of 15 comprise around 40 per cent of the population. This proportion is even higher in poorer countries such as India and Bangladesh. However only a very small proportion of TV programmes, radio programmes, cinema, books, periodicals and newspapers are made for children. While published data on the proportion of children's media are scanty, it has been estimated that in some Asian countries, such as India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, this is less than five per cent. The lack of information on Children and Media is indicative of the lack of interest among research community and the ruling classes about this issue. It is also indicative of the absence of an accepted policy regarding communication for children. This situation becomes all the more glaring when one considers the fact that in many poorer countries in Asia, a large proportion of children who should be in school are not in school. The proportion is particularly high in the case of Asian girls.

In those countries where the economies are growing rapidly and racing ahead to stay competitive, rampant commercialism has entered children's media programming. For instance, programme related products are heavily advertised and marketed to children. Different media systems collaborate to produce and market children's products as part of their media fare. For example, the TV programme *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* spawned comic books, computer games, movies and countless commercials over radio and TV to make it a household name.

In this situation what kind of television programmes are offered to children between the ages of 6 and 15 years in Asian countries? Do they get what they like or do they like what they get? What sort of a world is created for children by these television programmes? To what extent are the policy makers and programme producers in Asian television stations aware of children's rights as enunciated by UN?[2] What are the resources available for the production of children's television programmes in Asia?

These are some of the questions that the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) addressed in an empirical study of television and children in nine Asian countries.[3] The study is expected to be completed by the end of 1997. A monograph containing the more significant findings is planned for publication in 1998.

It is common knowledge that countries in Asia have many cultural, economic and social differences. At the very elementary level one could discern two Asias: the poorer Asia and the richer Asia. Access to television are different in these two regions of Asia. Bangladesh and Nepal, two of the less developed countries in Asia, have around six television sets per 1000 population. The comparable figure for India and Indonesia are 38 sets and 46 sets respectively. In contrast to this in the richer parts of Asia ownership of television is quite wide-spread. South Korea has 416 sets per 1000 population, Singapore 200 sets and Malaysia 102 sets (Goonasekera and Holaday, 1993).

There are also different types of ownership and management of television stations in different countries in Asia. The stations may be owned by government, they may be owned by private individuals or it can be a mixture of the two. These factors have an important bearing on development of television broadcasting in Asian countries. They also influence the policies that are followed in relation to children's television programmes in these countries. Table 1 is a summary description of the television scene in terms of the level of economic development and patterns of ownership in 11 Asian countries.

Table 1. Television Ownership in Eleven Asian Countries

	Government	Private	Mixed
Less-industrialized/ poor	China, Nepal, Vietnam	Philippines[4]	India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka
Industrialized/rich			Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand

What are the types of television programmes available for children in Asia? For purposes of this research television programmes were classified into 12 types. The 12 categories are: Animation or Cartoons; Puppets; Story Telling; Serial/Drama; Pre-school Magazine; Magazine Information; Information/News; Magazine Entertainment; Quiz/Games; Pop Music; Religious; Cultural/Traditional. There is also an "other" category to include those programmes that cannot be classified within these 12 categories.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 give data on the basis of this classification for two countries. The countries are India and Malaysia. India is from the poorer region of Asia, and Malaysia is from the richer region. India has an open skies policy regarding reception

Table 2. Telecast of Children's Programmes* Doordarshan India

Programme type	Duration in minutes per week Local	Duration in minutes per week Foreign	Total broadcast time per year in minutes (hours)**		As percentage of all children's programmes
Animation	85	150	12220	(203.66)	19.83
Puppets	–	–	–	–	–
Story telling	–	90	4680	(78.00)	7.59
Serial/drama	60	60	6240	(104.00)	10.12
Pre-shool magazine	20	–	1040	(17.33)	1.69
Magazine information	70	–	3640	(60.66)	5.91
Information/news	–	–	–	–	–
Magazine entertainment	110	–	5720	(95.33)	9.28
Quiz/games	60	–	3120	(52.00)	5.06
Pop music	–	–	–	–	–
Religious	–	–	–	–	–
Cultural/traditional	30	–	1560	(26.00)	2.53
Other***	450	–	23400	(390.00)	37.97
TOTAL	885	300	61620	(1026.98)	100.00

	Total broadcasting per week in hours		Total broadcasting per week in hours
National DD	5.05	Bombay Regional	3.00
Metro DD2	5.30	Hyderabad Regional	1.00
Madras Regional	2.20	Bangalore DD	1.30
		Thiruvananthira	1.00

* Based on schedule for 1 week.

** Calculated on the basis of broadcast time per week 1995.

***Covers variety programmes for children wich include story telling, drama, quiz/games, music.

of satellite television programmes by its citizens, whereas Malaysia has imposed restrictions.

Table 2 gives data for Doordarshan (DDI) in India. It is based on programme schedules for one week in January 1995. Two factors stand out in these data. One is the predominance of animation programmes. It is the single largest category of programmes (19.83%). This is so for many other countries in Asia. The second is the dominance of foreign programmes in this category (63.8%).

The predominance of foreign programmes is compounded by a more recent phenomena in the television scene in India. This is the transmission of programmes by foreign multinational television broadcasters such as StarTV, CNN and BBC World Service to Indian audiences. In addition India has its own satellite channels, some of which are up-linked from foreign points of origin such as Hong Kong (see Table 3).

Table 3. Telecast of Children's Programmes in Indian Satellite Channels

Programme type	Duration in minutes per week		Total broadcast time per year in minutes (hours)		As percentage of all children's programmes
	Local	Foreign			
Animation	60	780	43680	(728)	41.79
Puppets	–	–	–	–	–
Story telling	–	–	–	–	–
Serial/drama	–	420	21840	(364)	20.90
Pre-school magazine	–	–	–	–	–
Magazine information	–	–	–	–	–
Information/news	–	–	–	–	–
Magazine entertainment	–	–	–	–	–
Quiz/games	150	60	10920	(182)	10.45
Pop music	30	–	1560	(26)	1.49
Religious	–	–	–	–	–
Cultural/traditional	30	–	1560	(26)	1.49
Other	480	–	24960	(416)	23.88
TOTAL	750	2010	104520	(1742)	100.00

	Total broadcasting per week in hours
STAR TV	20.00
ZEE TV	4.00
SUNTV/ASIANET/RAJTV	3.30
JAIN TV	6.00
TOTAL	33.30

Here again the dominant type of programme for children are animation or cartoon programmes (41.8%) followed by drama programmes (20.9%). India has not controlled direct access to satellite programmes by its citizens. However most of the foreign satellite programmes are distributed mainly through Indian cable companies. Most people in India cannot afford satellite reception dishes as they are too expensive for them. These people subscribe to the cable services which re-transmit foreign satellite services along with local programmes such as local language movies.

Table 4 gives comparable data for Malaysia which is a much wealthier country than India. Unlike India, Malaysia controls access of its citizens to foreign satellite broadcasts by requiring them to get a license to use a satellite dish. The data in this table are in respect of locally broadcast programmes in three Malaysian channels viz. RTM1, RTM2 and TV3. Here again there is a predominance of foreign material among children's programmes. Nearly 88 per cent of all children's programmes are of foreign origin. Controlling satellite access to its citizens alone is not enough to prevent the dominance of foreign programmes. Alongside such a policy there should also be active encouragement of local programme producers to produce programmes for children. Market forces by themselves may not generate sufficient local television programmes for children.

Table 4. Telecast of Children's Programmes in Malaysia (RTM1, RTM2, TV3) (1994)

Programme type	Duration in minutes per week		Total broadcast time per year in minutes (hours)		As percentage of all children's programmes
	Local	Foreign			
Animation	–	390	20280	(338.0)	37.14
Puppets	–	180	9360	(156.0)	17.14
Story telling	–	60	3120	(52.0)	5.71
Serial/drama	–	30	1560	(26.0)	2.86
Pre-school magazine	30	–	1560	(26.0)	2.86
Magazine information	20	60	4160	(69.3)	7.62
Information/news	–	60	3120	(52.0)	5.71
Magazine entertainment	60	–	3120	(52.0)	5.71
Quiz/games	–	20	1040	(17.3)	1.90
Pop music	–	–	–	–	–
Religious	20	–	1040	(17.3)	1.90
Cultural/traditional	–	–	–	–	–
Other	–	120*	6240	(104.0)	11.43
TOTAL	130	920	54600	(909.9)	100.00

*Action packed drama.

Table 5. Availability of Children's Programmes in 7 Asian Countries by Programme Type Duration (minutes) for One Year

Country Station / Programme type	Doordarshan India		Indian satellite channels		Malaysia		China		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka		Thailand	
	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)	Local (%)	Foreign (%)
Animation	4420 *(7.17)*	7800 *(12.65)*	3120 *(2.98)*	40560 *(38.80)*	–	20280 *(37.14)*	6760 *(10.92)*	14560 *(23.52)*	2080 *(21.05)*	–	–	7280 *(15.38)*	540 *(2.13)*	6000 *(23.72)*	1040 *(4.25)*	–
Puppets	–	–	–	–	–	9360 *(17.14)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	900 *(3.55)*	360 *(1.42)*	–	–
Story telling	–	4680 *(7.59)*	–	–	–	3120 *(5.71)*	2340 *(3.78)*	–	1560 *(15.78)*	–	–	–	4000 *(15.81)*	–	–	–
Serial/drama	3120 *(5.06)*	3120 *(5.06)*	–	21840 *(20.89)*	–	1560 *(2.85)*	10920 *(17.64)*	–	–	–	10920 *(23.07)*	–	1140 *(4.50)*	1200 *(4.74)*	7800 *(31.91)*	–
Pre-school magazine	1040 *(1.69)*	–	–	–	1560 *(2.85)*	–	–	–	–	–	1820 *(3.84)*	–	100 *(0.39)*	2000 *(7.90)*	–	–
Magazine information	3640 *(5.90)*	–	–	–	1040 *(1.90)*	3120 *(5.71)*	6240 *(10.08)*	–	1560 *(15.78)*	–	–	–	450 *(1.77)*	800 *(3.16)*	3120 *(12.76)*	–
Information/news	–	–	–	–	–	3120 *(5.71)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Magazine entertainment	5720 *(9.28)*	–	–	–	3120 *(5.71)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	7280 *(15.38)*	300 *(1.18)*	200 *(0.79)*	3120 *(12.76)*	–
Quiz/games	3120 *(5.06)*	–	7800 *(7.46)*	3120 *(2.98)*	–	1040 *(1.90)*	780 *(1.26)*	–	1560 *(15.78)*	–	10920 *(23.07)*	–	1500 *(5.93)*	–	3120 *(12.76)*	–
Pop music	–	–	1560 *(1.49)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5460 *(11.53)*	–	1700 *(6.72)*	100 *(0.39)*	–	–
Religious	–	–	–	–	1040 *(1.90)*	–	–	–	–	–	3640 *(7.69)*	–	4000 *(15.81)*	–	4680 *(19.14)*	–
Cultural/traditional	1560 *(2.53)*	–	1560 *(1.49)*	–	–	–	1560 *(2.52)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1560 *(6.38)*	–
Other	23400 *(37.97)*	–	24960 *(23.88)*	–	–	6240 *(11.42)*	18720 *(30.25)*	–	3120 *(31.57)*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	46020 *(74.66)*	15600 *(25.30)*	39000 *(37.30)*	65520 *(62.67)*	6760 *(12.36)*	47840 *(87.58)*	47320 *(76.47)*	14560 *(23.52)*	9880 *(100.00)*	–	32760 *(69.20)*	14560 *(30.76)*	14630 *(57.79)*	10660 *(42.12)*	24440 *(100.00)*	–

How widespread in Asia are the characteristics of children's programmes we have described for India and Malaysia? Table 5 and table 6 give a summary of comparable statistics for seven Asian countries. The statistics show a predominance of animation programmes followed by drama. Furthermore nearly 47 per cent of all programmes for children are of foreign origin. The data also show paucity of informational, cultural and preschool programmes among the total fare offered to children.

Table 6. Telecast of Children's Programmes in seven Asian Countries 1994/1995

	Average broadcast time per year in hours				As percentage of all programmes for children
Programme type	Local		Foreign		
Animation	11312.66	(3.40)	82162.66	(25.00)	28.40
Puppets	900	(0.27)	9720	(2.95)	3.22
Story telling	5599	(1.70)	7800	(2.37)	4.07
Serial/drama	23162	(7.00)	27720	(8.43)	15.43
Pre-school magazine	4520	(1.38)	2000	(0.60)	1.98
Magazine information	9914	(3.01)	3920	(1.20)	4.21
Information/news	–	–	3120	(0.95)	0.95
Magazine entertainment	12260	(3.72)	7480	(2.27)	5.99
Quiz/games	28033	(8.52)	4160	(1.26)	9.79
Pop music	8720	(2.66)	100	(0.03)	2.69
Religious	13360	(4.07)	–	–	4.07
Cultural/traditional	4706	(1.42)	–	–	1.42
Other	51792	(15.75)	6240	(1.90)	17.65
TOTAL	174278.66	(52.90)	154422.66	(46.97)	100.00

While these characteristics are common to many Asian countries there are also significant differences in policies regarding children's television in Asia. Some of these are described below.

In *China*[5] there are two kinds of programmes relating to children. One is programmes aimed directly at children. Such programmes include entertainment, education and news. The other type is programmes aimed at educating adults regarding their duties towards children. How familiar are the TV producers of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC)? Leading group of China Central Television (CCTV) in Beijing and particularly CCTV Youth and Children's Department were aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Contents of the Convention are consciously incorporated into TV programmes. Examples of such television programmes are those made for the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (December), the International Children's Day (June), and programmes telecast on winter and summer vacations. *Big Wind Mill* and *Tell It Like It Is* are two television programmes that incorporated the principles of UN CRC. Implementation of the UN CRC provisions is often considered in combination with that of the National Programme of Action for Child Development in China.

In *India*[6] the total number of children's programmes in all channels is less than one per cent. Most of these programmes are designed for upper class urban children. However these are not popular among this audience because of lack of entertainment. Not a single of the programmes recalled by the sample of children interviewed was made in India. When respondents from DDI were asked about programme priorities none of them mentioned children's programmes. None of the networks has any specific policies to create awareness or to create programmes on children's rights. An obvious gap in children's television programming in India is the virtual absence of programmes specifically made for early teens.

In *Indonesia*[7] tight competition for advertising revenue has resulted in little attention being paid to children's programmes because such programmes are perceived as being less attractive to advertisers. The emergence of private television and lack of proper policies and guidelines about programming content has resulted in an uncontrolled and confused situation. In this situation it has become difficult to develop children's television. Of 15 programmes most preferred by children, seven were programmes for adults. Station managers had little or no knowledge about UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In *Japan*[8] NHK has taken a leading role in the production of children's programmes. Its productions are enjoyable and has educational value. Children's programmes are broadcast in three out of four NHK channels. A project called YUMEDIA uses a travelling caravan to bring hands on broadcast experience to grade school children. In contrast to NHK, which is a public broadcast organization, the commercial stations in Japan do not have separate children's programmes. Children's programmes are included in programmes for family viewing. In commercial TV stations animation and metamorphosis drama are the main kinds of children's programmes. All children's programmes top rated by Japanese children are produced in Japan. Producers in NHK are well aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Publicity for children's rights are given through information and educational programmes.

In *Malaysia*[9] the government broadcasting station, RTM, is making a serious effort to produce children's television programmes. The commercial stations, TV3 and Metrovision, have not shown similar enthusiasm. This neglect is due to the perception that children's programmes do not have much appeal to the advertisers. RTM producers are quite aware of the UN Convention on Children's Rights. They have gained this knowledge through international conferences in which they have participated. Private broadcasters on the other hand are unaware or vaguely aware of UN CRC.

In *Nepal*[10] severe financial constraints have hampered the production of children's television programmes. Children's programmes hold low priority due to the perceived lack of advertising/market support. This is made worse by lack of adequate training in the production of children's programmes and lack of creativity. Nepalese television producers have heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but are not familiar with its detailed provisions.

In *Philippines*[11] there has been an increased interest in children's television programmes in recent years. However this still remains a neglected area. Lack of profit in children's programmes is the main reason for its neglect. Furthermore many children's issues have become politicized. Sometimes the way television handle these issues are not in the best interests of the children. For instance, child victims of sex and violence are made to relate gruesome details for the benefit of TV cameras. Several bills have been filed in the Philippines Congress to improve television programming for children. These include the introduction of a rating system and regulating television advertising.

In *Singapore*[12] there has been some revival of children's television programmes after corporatization of television in 1994. Locally produced children's TV programmes target a wide age range: from 4 to 12 years. Children within this age range have a wide variation of cognitive abilities. Television programmes targeting such a wide age range are generally ineffective in appealing to such a group. Television stations also broadcast a large number of programmes for pre-schoolers. Older children's needs are not sufficiently met. Consequently, older children consume a large proportion of adult programmes. No special training has been provided for children's programme producers. The programmes reflect Singapore's political and cultural climate. Stress is on maintaining racial and religious harmony and political stability. The priority given to children's programmes is low. This is because of the belief among managers that the audience ratings of these programmes do not justify high expenditure. Only few producers were aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In *Vietnam*[13] every year the government sets targets for producing children's programmes. These programmes are directed at children or are aimed to educate adults regarding the needs of the children. Financial limitations are a major factor which inhibits production of children's television programmes. There are very few programmes catering to children over ten years of age. Producers are aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and related state policies.

Overall children's programmes produced in many Asian countries do not appeal to the children for whom they are meant. Consequently only a small percentage of what is made available are actually watched by children. According to Mira Aghi (1996), an Indian media researcher, around 75 per cent of her sample of children mentioned programmes made for adults as the ones they liked. Crime, thrillers, comedies and family serials form the core of the programmes liked by her respondents. The Sri Lankan researcher Dharmadasa (1994) observes that locally produced children's programmes are often not up to the level with regard to quality and content that most children demand. According to a survey carried out by Survey Research Malaysia (1994), of 100 most viewed programmes in Malaysian television by children between the ages 6 and 14, only three are children's programmes. These are all foreign productions. Their rank is given in brackets: *Cyber Cop* (39th place), *Uetraman Trio* (63rd place), *Alamria Disney* (80th place).

Of the countries surveyed three have followed policies conducive to the development of television programmes for children. These are China, Vietnam and Japan. In China and Vietnam support received from the government was crucial. In

Japan public broadcasting policy of NHK was behind the success of children's television. However in many other countries children's television programmes had to compete in the marketplace. In this it could not succeed. The advertisers and marketers saw little profit to be made from children's television. The AMIC survey shows clearly the need to develop children's television in many countries in Asia. It also shows that market forces will not do this. A concerted effort by concerned groups is needed to mobilize support for children's television in Asia. Resources of government, civil society, educational institutions and commercial organizations need to be mobilized. At the Asian Summit of Child Rights and the Media[14] AMIC proposed the creation of an Asian Children's Communication Fund for the production and marketing of quality children's programme for television, radio and press. We believe that this is a practical way of addressing issues concerning children and media in Asia.

Notes

1. March Hare at the Mad Tea Party in *Alice in Wonderland.*
2. Children have inalienable rights. This fact was endorsed by the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the UN General Assembly in 1989. 191 governments are now State Parties to this international treaty including all nations in Asia-Pacific.
3. The countries are China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. The study was partially funded by UNICEF. In addition to these countries data for Sri Lanka and Thailand are also included in this paper.
4. Philippines does have two government supported stations.
5. Prof. Huang Chang Zhu, Deputy Director & Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Documentation & Information of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, was the lead researcher for the study in China.
6. Ms. Lalita Eashwer of Kanoi Marketing Services, Madras, was the lead researcher for the study in India.
7. Mr. Bob Gantarto, Researcher at Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation in Jakarta, was the lead researcher for the study in Indonesia.
8. Ms. Sachiko Kodaira, Senior Researcher at NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, Tokyo, was the lead researcher for the study in Japan.
9. Prof. R. Karthigesu and Dr. Shanti Balraj of the School of Communication, University Sains Malaysia in Penang, were joint lead researchers for the study in Malaysia.
10. Ms. Josefina Dhungana of DECORE Consultancy Group in Katmandu was the lead researcher for the study in Nepal.
11. Dr. Theresa H. Stuart, Social Mobilization Officer in UNICEF, Manila, was the lead researcher for the study in the Philippines.
12. Ms. Lin Ai Leen of the School of Communication Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, was the lead researcher for the study in Singapore
13. Prof. Chung A, Director, Centre for Sociology at Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy was the lead researcher for the study in Vietnam.
14. The Summit was held in Manila, Philippines, during 2-5 July 1996. It was the first Children's Summit organized for the print, broadcasting, film and advertising media. It was supported

by Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU), Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), Philippines Children's Television Foundation (PCTVF), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of the Philippines.

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Media Influence and Chinese Urban Children's Ethics Development[1]

SUN YUNXIAO

In the earlier 1980s, media such as television, tape recorder, video tape recorder, video game machine, etc., began to be popularized throughout mainland China. In 1980, mainland China had 9,020,000 colour TV sets, and by 1990 it had increased 1,956% and reached 185,460,000 sets with an average of 79.4 people to one set. Meanwhile the public prints also greatly increased. From 1976 to 1982, the prints for children and juveniles rose from 880 kinds to 3,690 kinds and the impression from 268,000,000 copies to 1,034,000,000 copies. In 1989, 3,861 kinds of books for children and juveniles with an impression of 1,719,300,000 copies and 76 kinds of magazines with an impression of 145,860,000 copies were published. In 1990, 42 kinds of newspapers with a circulation of 545,870,000 copies were printed. Generally speaking, the main users of these media were in urban areas.

China has a population of 1.2 billion and 320 million families, 20.72% of which, about 66 million, are only child families. The investigation on media use in the only child families (1996) shows that 98.9% of the only child families have televisions, 92.3% have radios, 72.8% have telephones, 62.1% have video tape recorders, 60.3% have video game machines, 35.9% have learning automations, and 20.6% have computers. Each family subscribes to 3.8 newspapers and magazines on average, 2.58 of which are for the only child.

It is obvious that using and enjoying media has become an important part in children's lives because of the popularity of media and thus their lives have been greatly influenced by media. Therefore, the relationship between the use of media and the ethics development of children has become a new question for study. So the purpose of our research is to: (1) describe and analyze the conditions of the use of media among Chinese urban children; (2) describe and analyze the conditions of the ethics development of Chinese urban children; (3) prove and explain the correlation between the use of media and ethics development; (4) compare the effects of the factors that influence ethics development when children use the media; (5) put forward suggestions how we could utilize media to improve ethics education.

Hypotheses

Children's use of media means the actions that children choose so as to use media to meet their needs under a certain social influence.

As for ethics, it has many different definitions given by different countries and academic fields. But according to Piaget, "each ethics has a system which has many rules in it, and the nature of ethics is that one learns to obey these rules". Thus what we mainly study is the contents and the standards of the ethics in the current society and how well children learn and obey these rules.

According to the children's ethics education outline issued by China State Education Commission in 1993 and referring to the contents and the standards of ethics as defined by the earlier researchers, we define the contents and the standards of the ethics learned by children as those which cover the main aspects of their individual and social lives. Ethics can be roughly divided into two kinds: (1) individual ethics – individual ethics mainly refers to the social ethical standards that children learn and obey in order to satisfy their needs for self-development. It includes: in the aspect of material life – eat food that benefits health, dress plainly and neatly, love sports, study hard, fulfill tasks independently, love labor, practice thrift; in the aspect of social life – strong desire for knowledge and information, love art. (2) social ethics – social ethics mainly refers to the moral standards, the nature and the codes of conduct that a child should follow when he coordinates the relationships between himself and another person, a collective or the society. It includes: honesty, equality, independence, being ready to help others, care for collective, patriotism. The difference in children's ethics level lies in: (1) whether or not they obey all the ethics codes; (2) to what extent they can obey the rules.

In modern society, the mass media have been regarded as one of the most important factors affecting children's socialization, other important factors being family, school and same age groups. However, the educational and recreational contents in media have high heterogeneity. The media spread educational information close to social reality, which corresponds to the ethic concepts and behaviors the modern society demands. On the contrary, the recreational contents spread information about the imaginary world that is far from the actual world, so they maintain a distance from the ethical concepts and behaviors modern society demands.

Considering the above analysis, our hypotheses are: There is a correlation between the media and the moral concept and the behavior of children. The more contact children have with media that contains knowledge, the better their moral concept and behavior will meet the needs of modern society.

Methodology

Our research is carried out mainly by questionnaire.

According to *China Urban Society Economic Almanac* (1992), China has 469 cities, in which there are 13,800,000 primary pupils and 6,311,500 junior middle school students. 187 out of the 469 cities are medium or above with a total population of 178,070,000 that accounts for 15.6% of the total population in China and 53% of the total population in urban areas. We took 3,360 samples from grade 3 of primary school to grade 3 of junior middle school from 112 schools in 16 cities out of the 187 medium or above cities, and 3,337 valid questionnaires were taken back. The cities are Shanghai, Huizhou in Guandong province, Baoji in Shaanxi province, Wuhan in Hubei province, Changchun in Jilin province, Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, Jinchang in Gansu province, Huaiyin in Jiangsu province, Taiyuan in Shanxi province, Yingkou in Liaonin province, Cangzhou in Hebei province, Juijiang in Jiangxi province, Puyang in Henan province, Neijiang in Sichuan province, Rizhao in Shandong province, Sanya in Hainan province, and so on.

The composition of the sample is as follows: Boys comprise 47.2% of the total, while girls comprise 52.8%. 1% are 8 years old or below, 9.2% are 9 years old, 13.9% are 10 years old, 15.7% are 11 years old, 15.2% are 12 years old, 11.1% are 13 years old, 13.4% are 14 years old, 12.7% are 15 years old and 7.2 % are 16 years old or above.

Besides questionnaires, we organized 32 seminars in the 16 cities attended by 300 teachers and parents to get their ideas and suggestions on media influence and children's ethics development. In addition, comparative studies on average children, model children and exceptionally gifted children were conducted. The utilization of the various study methods assured the objectivity, accuracy and the scientific quality of the results.

Principal results and analysis

Firstly, Chinese urban children are exposed to many kinds of mass media. Although most children watch TV, it does not lead to a lessening interest in print. Children have limited reading ability, however over 50% of Chinese urban children's contact with print (2,407) is higher than with electronic media (2,052). This is of great importance to children's all-round development, especially the formulation of modern concept, and intelligence development. When children are about 10 years old, they are able to select different media to meet their needs. They will choose electronic media such as television, tape recorder, video tape recorder or video game machine when they need recreation or stimulation; they will choose television, broadcast or newspaper when they want to get news; they will choose print such as books, magazines or newspaper when they want to realize the present world and understand themselves; they will choose video game machine, tape recorder, television and telephone when they want to lessen life pressures, loneliness and annoyance. More than half of the children like pop music, which means children are likely to become socially involved when they are pupils. If the time a child has contact with electronic media exceeds two hours a day, it is possible that the child's social intercourse and study, even his mental health, will be affected. Generally speaking, the frequency, duration and kinds of media that Chinese children have contact with are reasonable. The abnormal phenomenon of children lost in some electronic media has not spread out in China. One important reason is that the economy in China developed so rapidly that various media developed almost at the same time; thus it is possible for children to select media to satisfy their own needs. Besides, the proper care of schools and families play an important role.

Secondly, Chinese urban children have the principal nature of ethics and behavior, however it is not satisfactory. In the aspect of patriotism, they got the highest average mark that was 4.56 points (total 5 points); as for the three other aspects – point of view on money, confidence and attitudes towards study – their marks are above the average. In the aspects of care for collective and others, good habits and customs, aspiring after knowledge and arts, physical training and independence, they obtained a mark lower than average, and the lowest mark was 3.27 points in independence, which could not meet the demands of a modern society.

According to research on the personality development of Chinese urban only children, we find that the only child has a greater desire for affinity and persistence and that 70% of the only children can accept themselves. But most of the only children do not have a strong desire for achievement although they are in better living conditions and their parents place high hopes in them. Some only children are relatively aggressive, which has become a main shortcoming in their personality.

Thirdly, there exists a correlation between children's contact with media and their ethics points of view and behavior:

1. There exists a notable positive correlation between children's moral marks and the frequency and duration of children's contact with broadcast and print, such as newspapers, magazines, books, and so on. That is, the more frequently and longer children listen to broadcast and read newspapers, magazines and books, the higher moral marks they gain; the higher moral marks they gain, the more frequently and longer they have contact with these four kinds of media. On the contrary, there exists a negative correlation between children's moral marks and the frequency and duration of children's contact with television, video tape recorders and video game machine. That is, the more frequent and longer children's contact with television, video tape recorder and video game machine, the lower moral marks they gain; the lower moral marks they gain, the more frequent and longer their contact with these three kinds of media.

A study on Chinese children's ideological, ethical and cultural condition (including rural areas) in 1996 shows that as high as 75.4% of the primary pupils regard books as the most helpful to their growth (see Table 1).

As for middle school students, what they think is a little different from the primary school pupils (see Table 1). What is worth paying attention to is that 28% of the middle school students think that the computer is the most helpful, which ranks the sixth in the list. That is, at least 28% of the middle school students are computer users, and have entered the information society.

Table 1. Media that Is Most Helpful

	to Primary School Pupils			to Middle School Students	
	media	(%)		media	(%)
1.	Book	75.4	1.	Newspaper	82.7
2.	Newspaper	68.8	2.	Book	80.4
3.	Broadcast	30.1	3.	Television	56.7
4.	Magazine	29.3	4.	Magazine	44.7
5.	Television	24.5	5.	Broadcast	37.8
6.	Computer	13.7	6.	Computer	28.0
7.	Film	7.9	7.	Film	12.8
8.	Cartoon	5.3	8.	Tape	8.7
9.	Tape	3.1	9.	Cartoon	5.6
10.	Karaoke	1.4	10.	Light disk	3.7
11.	Play	1.2	11.	Play	3.0
12.	Video tape	0.9	12.	Karaoke	2.5
13.	Video game machine	0.8	13.	Video game machine	2.3
14.	Light disk	0.7	14.	Video tape	2.0
		N=2,200			N=1,206

When we ask a primary school pupil or a middle school student "Which media in the list do you think has the worst effect on you?", 87.2% primary school pupils will answer that it is video game machine (see Table 2).

The middle school students' ideas are a little different from the primary school pupils (see Table 2).

Table 2. Media that Has the Worst Effect

	on Primary School Pupils			on Middle School Students	
	media	(%)		media	(%)
1.	Video game machine	87.2	1.	Video game machine	85.9
2.	Karaoke	41.8	2.	Video tape	58.1
3.	Video tape	39.5	3.	Karaoke	41.9
4.	Cartoon	21.4	4.	Cartoon	35.0
5.	Light disk	20.1	5.	Light disk	18.6
6.	Television	17.4	6.	Television	14.7
7.	Computer	11.7	7.	Magazine	11.9
8.	Tape	10.4	8.	Tape	12.3
9.	Film	7.1	9.	Film	9.4
10.	Magazine	3.7	10.	Book	6.0
11.	Play	3.6	11.	Computer	3.6
12.	Book	1.5	12.	Newspaper	1.8
13.	Broadcast	0.9	13.	Play	1.5
14.	Newspaper	0.9	14.	Broadcast	1.0
		N=2,200			N=1,206

But we can not simply conclude that electronic media is harmful to children. In fact, television, video tape recorder and video game machine are neutral; therefore their effects depend on the users – who use them, how they use them, for what purpose they use them and how they understand them, and so on. Media is only one of the various factors that affect children's ethics development. Video game machine will exercise bad influence over a child when his/her family relations become strained, or when his/her own life is not successful or when he/she has a strong desire for violence.

2. As for the contact with print and broadcast, there is a notable difference between the high frequency group and the lower frequency group in their preference for the contents of the media: children in the high frequency group obviously prefer the educational contents on television, broadcast, newspaper and books; while the lower frequency group obviously prefers the recreational and stimulating programs and popular literature in books. There exists a notable positive correlation between the knowledgeable contents in different media and children's moral marks. Thus, our hypotheses are proved.

3. There exists a notable positive correlation between children's moral marks and the contents of children's literature in television, broadcast, newspaper, magazine and books. With the development of China's commodity economy, the main tendency of children's literature is healthy and helpful and good for children's development. And children think it is most helpful. Children's literature refers to animated cartoon TV plays, TV play serials for children, theatrical performances for children; fairy tales, children's stories, reportage, fables, essays in magazines and newspapers; and songs for children. We can conclude that children who gain high moral marks like children's literature, and there forms a benign cycle between the contents of children's literature and children's ethics development.

4. There exists a negative correlation between children's moral marks and the recreational and stimulating contents in television programs. The two possible reasons for this negative relationship are: (1) the ethical point of view and behavior standards that exist in the media are contrary to those that the children are asked to learn and follow; (2) when the ethical point of view and behavior standards that exists in media agree with those the children are asked to learn and follow, the negative relationship is probably caused by children's misunderstanding of the programs for adults because they lack the necessary and complete background knowledge; therefore they might misunderstand or distort the contents of the programs. Sometimes the two reasons take effect at the same time.

Comments

The above research is just the first step and worth continuing. Your support and cooperation are welcome.

Based on our present results, we make the following suggestions:

1. Encourage children to come into contact with print and advocate and organize their listening to broadcasts for children. For this purpose, we should make well-

known to parents and teachers the meaning of print and broadcast, and pass on all the effective experience.

2. Strengthen, promote and spread educational contents and children's literature. Guide children to better contact with the educational contents and children's literature in such media as television, broadcast, newspaper, magazine, etc.

(1) Encourage and advocate writers to produce high quality, educational and literary works which reflect children's lives so as to attract them to reading.

(2) Make great efforts to develop television art for children. Because of the lack of the literary and educational TV programs that are appropriate for them, children have been in contact with programs for adults, such as *gong-fu* films, amorous films, and so on. If this continues, it may probably cause misunderstanding and misbehavior because of their lack of knowledge and experience. According to a report in the 4th issue of *Juvenile Study* by China Youth and Juvenile Research Center, titled *Tragedy from Teenage – Research on the Causes of 115 Capital Prisoners*, all the 115 capital prisoners committed crimes during their teenage years. 30.5% of them had been juvenile offenders and 61.5% of them had criminal records by their teenage years. 103 of the 115 were affected by indecent video tapes, which accounted for 90%. A rapist raped a young girl when he saw two lovers flirting on TV. Thus, it is of great importance to give energetic support to the development of healthy television art for children.

3. Strengthen the guidance of children's use of television, video tape recorder and video game machine. Spread the related knowledge to parents and teachers. Improve children's ability to analyze and evaluate electronic media. Ask children to lessen the frequency of using electronic, audio and video media, for example, three times a week and 1.5 hours each time. Encourage children to learn to exist, care for others and develop themselves in order to grow up as physically and mentally healthy modern people.

Note

1. This paper was presented at the International Forum Researchers *Youth and Media – Tomorrow*, April 21-25, 1997, in Paris, France, organised by GRREM (Group de recherche sur la relation enfants/médias).

References

China Youth and Juvenile Research Center has made a series of investigations since 1992, such as *Media Influence and Chinese Urban Children's Ethics Development* (1992), *The Childhood and Education of the Outstanding Youth* (1995), *The Ethic and Cultural Conditions of Chinese Children and Juveniles* (1996), *The Personality Development and the Education of the Chinese, Urban Only Child* (1996).

Children and Electronic Media

An Australian Perspective

STEPHEN NUGENT

Radio, free-to-air television, pay television, prerecorded videos, computer/video games, on-line services – the electronic media choices available to children in Australia in the second half of the 1990s are extensive. The following statistics provide an indication of the choices available and help set the scene for children's use of the media.

- Nearly all Australian households (approximately 99%) have at least one television set. Of these television households, 43% have one set, 40% have two and 17% have three or more.
- A majority of television households (85%) also have one or more video cassette recorders (VCRs).
- One in five (22%) have a video game connected to a television set.[1]
- Penetration of pay TV services and the Internet are lower but increasing. Figures for February 1997 put penetration of both at around 6% of television households.[2] More recent estimates put pay TV penetration at more than 10% of households.[3]

Research conducted in 1995 indicates that penetration of various media in households with children is higher than in households generally. The Australian Broadcasting Authority's (ABA's) monograph *Families and Electronic Entertainment* cited Reark Research figures on media ownership rates for all households compared to households with children (6 to 11 years) and households with teenagers (12 to 17 years). Table 1 reproduces the figures and indicates higher rates of VCR ownership and Internet access in households with children and teenagers.

The ABA's research for the *Families and Electronic Entertainment* monograph included an inventory of electronic entertainment equipment in homes with children

Table 1. Ownership of Media in Australian Households

Equipment	Total homes (%)	Homes with children (6-11 years) (%)	Homes with teenagers (12-17 years) (%)
Television	99	99	100
Video players	77	88	84
Personal computers	33	55	60
Mobile phones	22	27	33
Internet access	3	5	6

Source: Reark Research: *Information Technology and Communications Monitor*, June 1995.

and teenagers aged between 8 and 17 years. Table 2 includes a selection of results from the inventory.

It is interesting to note that in mid 1995 when these data were collected, 58% of households with children and teenagers had a TV-linked games machine. This compares with the 1996 ACNielsen figure of 22% of all households with a video game connected to the television set. It is also worth noting that pay TV equipment was not included in the inventory. This was due to the relatively late commencement of pay TV services in Australia. When the *Families and Electronic Entertainment* research was being devised in late 1994, pay TV services had not yet commenced.[4]

Table 2. Household (with Children and Teenagers 8 to 17 Years of Age) Ownership of Electronic Entertainment Equipment, Mid-1995

Equipment	At least one in household (%)	Two or more in household (%)
Television	100	76
Radio, cassette or CD player	96	83
Video player/recorder	93	22
Stereo system	89	30
TV-linked games machine	58	9
Hand-held video game	39	13
	n=743	n=743

Source: Cupitt & Stockbridge, 1996.

Time spent using electronic media

While the majority of Australian children and teenagers have a variety of electronic media options available to them in the home, it is still free-to-air television which dominates their leisure time. The *Families and Electronic Entertainment* research included a three day time-use diary for children and teenagers to complete in relation to their leisure time, i.e. excluding time spent at school, travelling, sleeping, personal care and doing household chores.

Diary results showed that an average of 5 hours and 40 minutes a day was spent on leisure activities by the 500 children and teenagers who completed and returned diaries. This comprised:

- 3 hours and 10 minutes on electronic entertainment activities, and
- 2 hours and 30 minutes on non-electronic entertainment leisure activities.

On top of this, an average of 41 minutes a day was spent doing school homework.

Analysis of time spent on leisure and homework activities indicated that television was the most time-consuming activity with an average of 33% of available time. This was followed by:

- going to places (11% of time spent on leisure and homework activities),
- doing homework (11%),
- general play (10%),
- playing sports (8%),
- listening to music on radio, CD or cassette (7%),
- playing computer/video games (5%), and
- hanging around (5%).

The relative amounts of time spent on different activities varied depending on the age and gender of the child or teenager. The *Families and Electronic Entertainment* monograph describes these variations:

> The amount of time spent listening to music, watching television, hanging around and doing homework increased with the age of the child. Listening to music on cassette, CD or radio tended to be highest among 12 to 17 year olds. Compared to older children and teenagers, younger children spent more time drawing or writing letters and general play.
>
> Compared to girls, boys spent significantly more time watching television, playing sport and playing video games over the survey period. Girls spent more time reading, listening to tapes and CDs and drawing or writing letters than boys ... (pp. 22-23)

Even with these age and gender variations, television viewing remained the single most time-consuming activity amongst all groups of children and teenagers. ACNielsen figures for television viewing by children and teenagers indicate that the average amount of time spent watching per day has remained relatively stable over the last six years (see Table 3).

Table 3. Average Daily Television Viewing – 1991 to 1996

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
All People	3h 13m	3h 14m	3h 11m	3h 12m	3h 13m	3h 14m
Children 5-12	2h 39m	2h 31m	2h 34m	2h 39m	2h 33m	2h 31m
Teens 13-17	2h 44m	2h 43m	2h 43m	2h 43m	2h 34m	2h 33m

Source: ACNielsen, *TV Trends 1997.*

Given the dominance of television viewing in the lives of children and teenagers in Australia, it is useful to spend some time considering the channels and content available to them and the programs they actually watch.

Television services in Australia

A 1996 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that there were approximately 12.2 million television sets in Australia or 1.9 sets per television household.[5] A large majority of television households have access to three commercial free-to-air television services as well as the Government-funded national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).

In the capital cities, larger metropolitan centres and many regional areas, households also have access to the other Government-funded service, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). The principal function of the SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society.

Community television services also operate in some markets.

The level of Australian content on the free-to-air commercial services is governed by a standard administered by the ABA. The Australian Content Standard requires that at least 50% of all programming broadcast between 6 a.m. and midnight be Australian. This requirement will increase to 55% from the beginning of 1998.

The ABA also administers the Children's Television Standard (CTS) which has its objective:

> Children should have access to a variety of quality television programs made specifically for them, including Australia drama and non-drama programs.

Commercial television services are required by the CTS to broadcast at least 390 hours of children's programs per year. For the purposes of the standard, children's programs are those classified either C or P by the ABA. C programs are aimed at primary school children and P programs at preschool children. The 390 hours per year of children's programs are made up of at least 130 hours of P programs and at least 260 hours of C programs.

To be classified as either C or P by the ABA, the program must meet a number of criteria. These are:

1. made specifically for children or groups of children within the preschool or primary school age range;
2. entertaining;
3. well produced using sufficient resources to ensure a high standard of script, cast, direction, editing, shooting, sound and other production elements;
4. enhances a child's understanding and experience; and
5. appropriate for Australian children.

In addition to C and P programs, there are many other programs on commercial television which target a child audience. These are classified either G (General) or PG

(Parental Guidance Recommended) by the broadcasters under the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice.

The ABC is not subject to the Australian Content Standard and the CTS. However, in line with its charter, a large proportion of its programming is Australian and its children's programming is extensive.

Pay TV services also carry children's programming. There are three drama pay TV channels which provide programming specifically for children: Nickelodeon Australia, The Fox Kids Network and The Disney Channel Australia. Each stresses the importance of localising their channels to the needs of Australian audiences and have set up local offices and facilities to encourage this.[6]

What children watch

ABA research conducted in 1995 and published in the monograph *Kids Talk TV: 'super wickid' or 'dum'* asked children 5 to 12 years of age what they liked and didn't like to watch on television. Comedy, drama, action adventure and variety were favourite program types. Favourite programs ranged from *Bananas in Pyjamas* and *A*mazing* (both Australian) for the youngest age group (primary school grades one and two), to *The Simpsons* (USA) and soaps such as *Neighbours* (Australian) which were popular with the oldest of the groups (grades five and six).

The children who participated in the research liked watching characters who were their own age or a bit older, or teenagers and young adults who seemed to be doing more interesting things. Acting ability and attitude were considered more important than the presence of good looking characters.

They defined boring programs as those without humour, action and adventure, those they had outgrown, news programs, programs with 'grown up' humour that children did not understand, and some documentaries. A Sydney girl in grade five talked about 'grown up' humour versus humour children could appreciate:

> Some of it is at our level and humour we can understand – some of the adult shows they have this grown up humour we can't understand (*Melrose Place*) but *The Nanny*... it's out of the ordinary. Would you really have a nanny like for these three sensible kids with a mini skirt and all these weird clothes? (pp. 51)

ACNielsen's television ratings data provide a quantitative measure of what children like to watch. Table 4 presents the top 30 programs for children 5 to 12 years of age in Sydney in August 1996. The 1996 Olympics took place during this period and broadcasts of the Olympics dominate the list with nine of the top 30 places.

Other programs represent a mixture of Australian and overseas (predominantly the USA) productions. There are a wide variety of program types including situation comedies (e.g. *The Nanny* and *3rd Rock from the Sun*), 'reality' amateur video programs (e.g. *Australia's Funniest Home Video Show*), action adventure programs (e.g. *Hercules: Legendary Journeys*) and a game show featuring physical competition between competitors (*Gladiators*). While many of the top rating programs were not specifically aimed at children, some were, e.g. *The Genie From Down Under* and *Saturday Disney*.

Table 4. Top 30 Programs for Children 5 to 12 years – Sydney, August 1996

Program	Station*	Day of week	Start time	End time	Average rating (%)
1. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 9	7	Mon	19.30	20.30	26.6
2. The Nanny (Sun)	10	Sun	18.30	19.00	24.1
3. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 11	7	Wed	19.30	20.30	23.8
4. The Nanny (Rpt)	10	Sun	18.30	19.30	23.8
5. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 10	7	Tues	19.30	20.30	23.5
6. Home Improvement	7	Sun	19.30	20.00	23.2
7. Disney: Little Mermaids	7	Sat	9.00	9.30	22.3
8. Olympics 96: Late Breakfast Live Day 8	7	Sun	9.00	12.00	21.7
9. Who Dares Wins	7	Wed	19.30	20.00	21.5
10. The World's Greatest Commercials	7	Sun	20.00	20.30	20.4
11. What a Mess	2	Thur, Fri	17.00	17.30	19.6
12. Mot	2	MTWT	17.30	18.00	18.7
13. 3rd Rock from the Sun	7	Sun	20.00	20.30	18.7
14. Australia's Strangest Home Improvements	7	Wed	20.00	20.30	17.9
15. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 8	7	Sun	19.30	20.30	17.6
16. Australia's Funniest Home Video Show	9	Tues	19.30	20.00	17.4
17. The Genie From Down Under	2	Mon	17.00	17.30	17.2
18. The Legends of Treasure Island	2	TWTF	17.00	17.30	17.0
19. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 15	7	Sun	19.30	20.30	16.9
20. Amazing Live Sea-Monkeys	2	MTWT	17.30	18.00	16.9
21. The Simpsons (Sat)	10	Sat	18.30	19.00	16.7
22. Saturday Disney	7	Sat	7.00	9.00	16.2
23. Budgie the Little Helicopter	2	MTWTF	16.45	17.00	15.1
24. Hercules: Legendary Journeys	10	Sat	19.30	20.30	15.0
25. Insektors	2	MTWTF	16.45	17.00	15.0
26. Olympics 96: Weekend Replays Day 8	7	Sun	14.00	18.00	14.9
27. Gladiators	7	Sat	18.30	19.30	14.8
28. The Simpsons (WKNT)	10	MTWTF	18.00	18.30	14.6
29. Olympics 96: Luncheon Live Day 8	7	Sun	12.00	14.00	14.5
30. Olympics 96: Early Highlights Day 12	7	Thurs	19.30	20.30	14.0

* 7,9 and 10 are commercial stations while 2 is the national broadcaster, the ABC.

Source: ACNielsen, period – 28 July to 31 August 1996, potential child audience – 406,000.

Parental concern

Given the amount of time children in Australia spend watching television and using other forms of electronic entertainment equipment, the question arises as to what level of concern parents have about their children's electronic media usage. It is a question explored in the ABA's *Families and Electronic Entertainment* research.

Initially it was explored in the context of concerns about a range of social issues. Parents were asked which three issues were of greatest concern in relation to their child's well-being. The issue mentioned by the largest proportion of the sample was education (70% of parents mentioned it as one of their top three concerns). This was followed by:

- personal safety/security (68%);
- quality of life (53%);
- drugs (29%);
- employment (23%);
- electronic entertainment (18%); and
- natural environment (16%).

Within the electronic entertainment category, television was the issue of most concern, followed by computer/video games, video game arcades and videos. This ordering was reflected in the degree of concern expressed by parents when subsequently asked about the amount of time their children spent with different electronic media. Almost one in three parents (32%) indicated they had some level of concern about the amount of time spent by their child using television, 15% had some concern about the amount of time spent using computer/video games, while 9% had some concern about use of videos.

These findings indicate that while some parents have concerns about their children's use of electronic media, for most parents it is not a major issue. When asked about the balance their child had achieved between use of electronic media and other activities, 75% thought that their child had achieved a reasonable balance, while 15% indicated they wished their child was more involved in other activities and interests. The rest indicated that they wouldn't be bothered if their child was more involved in electronic entertainment.

The future

Australian children appear likely to have an increasing range of electronic media choices available to them. The number of households connected to the Internet continues to grow as does Internet access through educational institutions. ACNielsen data collected between August 1996 and January 1997 indicate that 44% of males and 35% of females in the 14 to 17 year age group had ever accessed the Internet, while 28% and 21% respectively had accessed in the previous month.[7]

The introduction of digital radio and digital television services, while some years away, also has the potential to increase the range of electronic media services available. With increased choice, there may be some erosion of the current dominance of Australian children's leisure time by free-to-air television. Patterns of media usage may change with increased use of interactive media and media catering more to specific interest groups rather than mass audiences. In the near future, however, free-to-air television is likely to remain a major consumer of Australian children's leisure time.

Notes

1. Figures for televisions, VCRs and video games are national averages for 1996 and are sourced from ACNielsen's publication *TV Trends 1997*. ACNielsen (now known as ACNielsen McNair) is the organisation in Australia which compiles the television ratings data.
2. Cited in article 'Pay Household Profiles Emerging as Ads Get Closer' in *Pay TV News*, February 21 to March 7, 1997, and sourced to ACNielsen.
3. Estimate reported in article 'Things not going better with pay TV' in *The Mercury* newspaper of 6 September 1997.
4. Pay TV services commenced in Australia in 1995.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics' Population Survey Monitor September 1996 cited in *AFC News*, March/April 1997.
6. For further details see 'Pay TV for Australian Children' by Belinda Mullen of the ABA's Children's Television Section in the June 1997 Newsletter (Issue No.4) of the International Research Forum on Children and Media.
7. Source: ACNielsen's publication *TV Trends 1997*.

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An Overview of Children's Broadcasting in South Africa

NADIA BULBULIA

> *In South Africa, where children have been, and in some cases still are, witnesses to violence and a general lack of self worth, are without hope and pride, broadcasting becomes a very important medium for overcoming fears and building optimism.*[1]

This article seeks to introduce the reader to the broadcasting landscape in South Africa, focusing on children's broadcasting. It will also highlight the developments within the country in advocating for quality children's programming.

Background

On June 16 1995, the South African Government of National Unity ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In so doing, it committed South Africa to implementing the principle of a "first call for children" whereby the needs of children are considered paramount throughout the Government's programmes, services and development strategies.[2] This principle was adopted by the Reconstruction and Development Programme and is the basis of South Africa's commitment to children.[3]

It is estimated that more than 35% of the total South African population (according to the last Census report) is below the age of 14 years.[4] Although South Africa has only recently ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it succeeded prior to the 1994 election, in having children in the country draft their own Children's Rights Charter in June 1992. This Charter referred to rights of the child in keeping with the UN CRC.

As an emerging democracy there is a need for more in-depth attention and focus to be placed on children and the media – in particular children and the electronic media. Research in the field of media and its effects on children, and in general the relationship between children and the media, is limited. This sector of the population is under-researched; however a Youth Commission[5] has been set up to address the needs and concerns of South Africa's young population.

A brief history of the South African broadcasting environment

Until 1993 broadcasting was predominantly the domain of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Established in 1936, as a radio service, the SABC developed regional services in the sixties and later ethnic language services in line with apartheid policy. Public television was finally introduced in 1976 after intensive parliamentary debate as the nationalist apartheid regime had been holding up the development of television since the early fifties. In 1985 the first independent television channel, Electronic Media Network (M-NET), was launched as a subscription service.

As the transition from apartheid to democracy began to unfold, and South Africa was to have its first democratic election, increasing attention was placed on the electronic media. For years it had been the mouthpiece of government and controlled by the state. Coalitions of anti-apartheid organisations were campaigning vehemently for open democratic broadcasting. As a result of these campaigns, questions of press freedom were placed on the agenda of the multi-party negotiations towards a democratic election. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was thus brought into being in 1994, by the then Transitional Executive Council. The main objective of the IBA at the time was to ensure a free, fair and open election and to create a transparent broadcasting environment.

The IBA Act was enacted on the 27 October 1993, and was the first Act of Parliament in the pre-election period which made provision for the public nomination of Councillors to head the IBA, and for a public hearings process of selection. The primary object of the Act is to provide for the regulation of broadcasting activities in the Republic in *the public interest* and to open the airwaves so as to

> promote the provision of a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional and local level, when viewed collectively cater for all languages and cultural groups and provide *entertainment, education and information.*[6] (Section 2 (a) IBA Act)

Although the IBA Act is not explicit on programming for children, it does mandate the Authority to regulate in the public interest. Children make up a large part of the public and constitute a sector (or special community) of the broader public. Programming in the public interest and thus programming for children is becoming a priority. This is evidenced in the IBA's Position Paper on Private Television (1997) where it mandates the first private free-to-air television service to broadcast at least 12 hours per week of children's programmes. These programmes in addition to being diverse in genre, must also take into consideration the needs of two age groups: 0-9 year olds and 9-15 year olds.

Broadcasting for children

Children's television in South Africa as a mass medium is in an embryonic stage of its development. Until 1990, there had been no real attempt to develop programmes that where relevant to the vast majority of children and thus have not been reflective of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society, nor of the everyday experiences of young people in the country.

I would argue that apartheid has prevented children from developing a sense of belonging and from becoming a holistic sector of the society, able to participate effectively. Indeed, apartheid has arguably brutalised children through its coercive policies especially in townships and rural areas. The propagandistic ambit of watered down projects of the SABC in the past, have been the result of programming policies for children that have been skewed under apartheid. The challenge now for public and private broadcasters alike, is to fulfil the requirements of the IBA Act and to develop programmes that entertain, educate and inform,[7] whilst correcting the exclusive practices of the past.

As stated before, children's responses to, and their consumption of, media remains under-researched in South Africa. The amount of time they spend watching television or listening to the radio is not monitored with any regularity, nor is the specific scheduling of their programmes analysed to determine their programme preferences.

The most relevant research conducted by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) into the child audience was completed in August 1997. It was the first time that 12-15 year olds were reported on in such a focused and detailed way.

The SAARF research on 'tomorrow's adults' was the first of its kind to be released in 13 years. Mr Ron Silke, MD of SAARF, argues that *"analysers of the report will no doubt spot many marketing and advertising opportunities to target this market"*.

Under the apartheid system people were classified according to race, i.e., White, Indian, Coloured (sometimes grouped together, WIC) and Black. The Black group refers to African citizens. Research is still conducted this way.

The study concluded the following:

It is estimated that there is a population of 3.6 million 12-15 year olds (urban, rural, all races).

- 58% (2.1 million) listened to the radio 'yesterday' and 85% (3.1 million) in the 'last seven days'.
- 53% (1.95 million) watched TV 'yesterday' and 67% (2.45 million) in the 'last seven days'.
- 32% (1.18 million) read any magazine 'yesterday'.
- 14% (505,000) read any newspaper 'yesterday' (of whom 5% read any daily English or Afrikaans newspaper, and 12% read any weekly newspaper).[8]
- 12% (442,000) saw a film in a cinema in the 'past 12 weeks'.

Consumption can be grouped as follows:

Table 1. Media Use among 12-15 Year Olds, by Race

Media	Black group (%)	White, Coloured and Indian (%)
Radio ('yesterday')	57	62
TV ('yesterday')	46	87
Magazine ('yesterday')	25	64
Newspaper ('yesterday')	9	34
Cinema ('past 12 weeks')	6	62

Source: South African Advertising Research Foundation, 1997.

South Africa has a very low level of television penetration if compared to western democracies; however, within Africa, South Africa has a substantially high access level. It is estimated that of the 41 million citizens, there are about 8.5 million households of which 5.2 million have television sets. This equates to almost 62% of South African households having access to television. This will no doubt increase as housing, electrification and employment increases. It must be noted that access to television, computers and the Internet is largely concentrated in the White, Indian and Coloured groupings.

Television services

Public

The public broadcaster, SABC, has three channels and delivers the bulk of its children's programming on SABC 1 and SABC 2. These programmes, though categorised separately for children and youth, do overlap substantially. In keeping with the policy of reconstruction and development, a considerable amount of work has gone into educational broadcasting. There is finally a concerted effort on the part of the restructured SABC to fulfil its mandate, to educate and inform children by providing both formal and informal knowledge building programmes.

Boputhutswana television (Bop TV), previously a 'homeland' broadcaster as set up during the apartheid government, is currently being incorporated into the SABC. It also broadcasts some children's programming as well as youth programming.

Private/commercial

M-NET, the only private and subscription based television service offers its subscribers a dedicated 3 hours per day of children's programming known as KTV or Kids TV. M-NET can be received in 31 African states via digital satellite services.

According to the TBI Yearbook 1997,[9] the share of adult audiences are as follows:

Table 2. Television Channels' Share of Adult Audience

Television service	Share of audience (%)
SABC 1	31.5
SABC 2	35.0
SABC 3	15.4
M-NET	16.9
C-SN (M-NET Community Services Network)	0.8
Bop TV	0.8

Source: Nielsen, South Africa.

Radio services

While radio continues to play a major role in reaching a mass audience, and the radio landscape of South Africa has grown rapidly, there is not much dedicated children's service. Of the 75 community radio stations only a hand-full deliver programming specifically for children. The private radio services (currently 16) offer no scheduled children's programmes. The public broadcaster with its 16 radio services has a limited children's focus. According to a survey conducted recently, of the 12 full spectrum stations, there are at least five stations[10] delivering dedicated programming to children. The majority of these programmes are aired weekly (Saturday mornings ranging from 7am to 10am) with one station delivering programming from 3pm to 4pm each weekday. However, as stated before, the public broadcaster is beginning to address the educational needs of all South Africa's children in a more holistic way.

South African programme content

The most popular television programmes according to recent audience ratings are local (i.e., South African) programmes. However, across the three SABC channels and M-NET, the most popular *children's* programmes are American sitcoms and musical programmes. Although the percentage of local children's programming across all broadcasters has increased in the last two years, children and adults alike argue that these programmes should be more 'relevant' and less foreign.[11]

These audience ratings refer only to television programmes. The popularity and success of radio programmes for children is not well researched or documented.

Local and African advocacy for quality children's programmes

As a result of the First World Summit on Television and Children held in Melbourne, Australia, in 1995, a South African lobby group, known as the Children and Broadcasting Forum (CBF), was formed. This group is represented by a broad cross section of stakeholders and the public, and includes broadcasters, children's rights organisations, NGO's, the regulator, and several government line departments. The CBF seeks to place children's broadcasting issues on the national agenda and challenge broadcasters to address the broadcasting needs of children.

In 1996, the CBF organised a regional (Southern African) summit on children's broadcasting. The summit produced a regional charter, in keeping with the International Children's Television Charter (CTC), which focused on the regions' concerns. It was then agreed that an Africa summit be organised for wider dialogue and exchange so that Africa can develop a policy framework for children's broadcasting to prioritise the needs of Africa's children.

In October 1997, the first Africa Summit on Children's Broadcasting was held in Accra, Ghana, and an Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting was drafted and accepted (see under the headline International Declarations and Resolutions). The Charter is also written in the spirit of the CTC and is inclusive of radio as the widest broadcast medium in Africa.

In August 1995 the Independent Broadcasting Authority accepted the International Children's Television Charter and also committed to give further consideration to the protection of children.[12]

The CBF is currently campaigning for endorsements from African broadcasters and relevant stakeholders to support the Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting.

Africa will be represented at the Second World Summit on Children's Television (UK, March 1998), and a dedicated plenary session has been organised for the region.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Mr Ron Silke, MD of The South African Advertising Research Foundation, for his assistance.

Notes

1. Independent Broadcasting Authority Triple Inquiry Report, 1995.
2. Stated at the launch of the National Plan of Action (NPA), 1996.
3. RDP – now disbanded as a ministry, but still has influence in each individual ministry.
4. Census figures are contentious and this figure could be much higher.
5. Government introduced a Youth Commission on June 16 1996 (Youth Day). This is a Statutory Body placed within the Office of the Deputy President.
6. My emphasis.
7. IBA Act – Section 2.
8. Access to newspapers in the rural areas remains low and there are very few African language newspapers.
9. TBI – *Television Business International, Yearbook 1997*, p. 301.
10. At the time this article was drafted, information about the following five stations were

recorded as doing programming for children: Ukhozi FM, Umhlobo Wenene, Lesedi FM, Thobela FM and Radio Lotus.

11. Foreign programming refers to all programmes other than South African.
12. IBA Triple Inquiry Report. 1995.

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Children and the Media in Flanders

A Brief Overview

Keith Roe

Belgium is probably the most cabled country in the world with 95% of households connected. Moreover, cabling began early: in 1972 almost 10% of households had already been connected, rising to almost half by 1975 and to almost 80% by 1980. The basic package offered to subscribers by the various cable providers normally consists of over 25 channels, and extra pay channels (e.g. for films and sport) are also widely available.

After a long process of decentralization, broadcasting in Belgium was completely devolved to the two main language communities – French speaking Wallonia and Dutch speaking Flanders – in 1991. At around this time there was a steady increase in the total number of hours broadcast by Flemish TV, mainly as a result of the arrival of a commercial channel in 1989. Thus, from roughly eleven-and-a-half hours of TV a day (spread across two public service channels) in 1988, the figure rose to over 24 hours a day (spread over three channels) in 1992. During this period the proportion of entertainment programmes also increased: from 67% to 79% on the commercial channel, and from 46% to 57% on the main public broadcast channel. Moreover, in each case, a disproportionate number of these programmes was broadcast during prime-time hours (Tanghe & De Bens, 1993).

Between 1990 and 1993 the total output of programmes on Flemish TV rose by an average of almost a fifth on the two public service channels, and by a third on the commercial channel. During the same period fictional output rose by about 90% on the public service channels and by 53% on the commercial channel. As a percentage of total output, fiction rose from 26% to 40% on the main public service channel and from 42% to 48% on the commercial channel (Biltereyst, 1996; cf. Biltereyst, 1992; De Bens, 1991; Tanghe & De Bens, 1993). 64% of this fictional content was of

North American origin – an unusually high figure for Europe at the time – followed by Australian, British and German material. However these figures conceal variations across channels, with as much as 83% of the fiction on the commercial channel originating from North America. Dutch-language fictional programmes (Flemish and from the Netherlands) are also very popular and tend to share prime-time slots with American programmes (Biltereyst, 1991).

According to recent figures (Blumler & Biltereyst, 1997), the two Flemish public broadcast channels devote a greater part of their total output time to children's programmes than the European average (15.2% compared to 9.5%). However, between 1991 and 1995 the percentage of self-produced children's programmes on these channels fell from 44.7% to 27.7%, the decline being accounted for by a corresponding increase in imported material, above all from the United States. Consequently, Flemish public broadcast TV now lies appreciably below the European average for self-produced children's TV (28% compared to 39%), and well above the European norm for imported American material (44% compared to 25%). Much of the American input is accounted for by Disney, with the result that cartoons make up 61% of Flemish public service children's programmes compared to an overall European average of 40% (Blumler & Biltereyst, 1997).

Children's TV-use

The first available figures of children's TV-use in Flanders (from 1978) indicated that Flemish children aged 4-11 years at that time watched TV for an average of 53 minutes a day, rising to 70 minutes a day in winter (seasonal variations in amount of TV-viewing remain large – see Roe & Vandebosch, 1996). By the end of 1996 the figure for the 4-11-year-olds had risen to 114 minutes a day and stood at 112 minutes a day for the 12-17-year-old age group (BRTN, 1996). However, recently, there have been indications that children may now be watching less TV than formally. A comparison between average daily viewing time in December 1995 and December 1996 indicated a drop of 28 minutes a day for 4-11-year-olds and of 16 minutes a day for 12-17-year-olds (BRTN, 1996). The reasons for this drop are uncertain, but recent studies (e.g. Roe & Muijs, 1995; 1997) indicate that the widespread use of VCR's (Video Cassette Recorders) and computer games may be having a displacement effect on television use.

Young children (under 12) have traditionally reported a preference for public service TV. However, in recent years two new commercial channels (bringing the total to three commercial channels) have begun transmission and a recent study of 10-year-olds (Roe & Muijs, 1997) suggests that the majority now prefer commercial television. The results showed one of the new commercial channels (VT4) to be the most popular, followed by the original commercial channel (VTM), the other new commercial channel (KA2) in third place, the movie pay-TV channel Filmnet in fourth, and the main public broadcaster (TV1) ranking only fifth. However, despite the popularity of commercial television, advertising appears to be unpopular. In a recent study of Flemish 9-12-year-olds, Tritsmans (1997) found that many Flemish children are very negative to and critical of TV-advertising. Paradoxically, however, most nevertheless admit at least occasionally buying the products featured.

Music television

The music video channel MTV is very popular in Flanders. In a study of 12-18-year-olds Roe & Cammaer (1993) found that less than 2% stated that they knew nothing about MTV, while 73% were able to name at least 5 MTV programmes. A significant proportion were found to be regular MTV viewers: 26% watching on a daily basis, and a further 16% watching at least every other day. Only 10% reported never watching MTV and of these a third were unable to receive the channel.

Nevertheless, much MTV viewing appears to be sporadic. The study indicated that only 38% watch on a planned regular basis, with 75% usually using the remote control to 'zap' in (and out) of MTV more or less randomly to check what is on. Moreover, 40% regularly use MTV merely as background music while engaged in other activities – mostly when reading, doing homework, eating and doing housework. Females tend to use MTV more as background than do males. There was a tendency for MTV viewing to increase with age, but amount of viewing was not significantly related to gender or to parents' socio-economic status. However, there was a negative correlation with school achievement (cf. Roe, 1983; 1987; 1988; 1989; 1992; 1993; 1995).

The same study indicated that the strongest motive for watching MTV is to hear the music, followed by 'relaxation', 'to relieve boredom', 'for information' and, 'to be able to talk to others about it'. Viewers were very familiar with the products advertised on MTV, with over 50% able to name three regular advertisers and, unlike the younger viewers in Tristman's study, the teenagers in Roe & Cammaers' were not particularly negative with regard to advertising. 59% agreed that there is just about enough advertising on MTV, compared to 37% who thought that there was too much. Moreover, 61% usually stay tuned during commercial breaks, compared to 27% who 'zap' away from the channel, and 12% who leave the set for some reason during advertising spots.

Gender and socio-cultural background

In the most recent major study of Flemish children's media use (10 year olds), Roe & Muijs (1997) found that a mere 0.7% live in households without a TV-set, compared to 49% living in homes with one, 37% with two, and 13% with 3 or more. Moreover 18% have a TV of their own (in their own room). 88% of the children lived in homes with a VCR, 51% with a personal computer and 72% had access to a computer game console.

The mean amount of TV-viewing was just over 15 hours a week. 68% watched TV on every school day and a further 14% watched on 4 days out of 5. The mean amount of time spent viewing at weekends was around 4 and three-quarter hours. In general boys watch significantly more television than do girls. Schoolday TV-viewing is greatest among those having fathers in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and less well educated mothers, and is lowest among those with fathers in the professions and whose mothers are highly educated. At the weekend, it is the children of service and sales workers, the unemployed and less well educated mothers who watch most and the children of professionals and mothers with a university education who watch least. On schooldays the average time at which viewing stops is ten past eight, with 14% continuing to watch TV after 9 p.m. The children of unskilled fathers and less well educated mothers tend to watch the latest and the children of clerks and university educated women stop viewing the earliest.

The most popular type of programme amongst Flemish 10-year-olds is comedy, followed by films, cartoons, and police/action series. The least popular are advertising, talk shows, information programmes, and science/technology programmes. However, there are strong gender differences in the structure of preferences (for more see Roe & Muijs, 1997; cf. Muijs, 1997). In terms of programmes actually watched, the most viewed categories are cartoons, followed by films and comedy.

13% used a VCR on 5 days a week or more. The mean amount of video viewing per day was 1 hour and 36 minutes. As with TV, boys use the VCR more than do girls. The children of unskilled and semi-skilled workers and less well educated mothers watch most video and children whose fathers are in the professions and whose mothers have received a university education watch least.

The most popular video genre is action, followed by comedy, karate, crime thrillers and westerns. The least popular are music videos, classic films, war films and sports videos. As with television, there are strong gender differences with regard to video preferences. In general there were no clear relationships between video preferences and socio-economic background, although, interestingly, the highest ratings for horror and action videos were given by those with university educated mothers, a result that can perhaps best be explained in terms of the 'forbidden fruit' mechanism.

Children whose fathers are professionals and whose mothers are university educated are most likely to live in a home containing a personal computer. 18% play computer games 5 days a week or more and the mean amount of time per day spent playing is just over an hour a day. 8% were classified as very heavy users (i.e. 3 hours a day or more). Boys play significantly more than girls. The children of unskilled and semi-skilled fathers and less well educated mothers play most and those with fathers working in agriculture and the professions and with university educated mothers play the least. The most popular game genres are platform games[1] followed by 'fighting' games.

Media use, literacy and school achievement

In the Roe & Muijs study media use was also related to literacy (reading comprehension and spelling) and school achievement. After controlling for gender and socio-economic status, amount of VCR use and amount of computer game playing were found to be negatively related to reading and spelling ability. However, contrary to conventional wisdom television use did not emerge in an especially bad light. Amount of TV-viewing was related to spelling and reading ability (though not to overall school achievement), but the relationship is not linear. On both the spelling and reading tests those watching least TV scored below average while those watching most TV scored best of all. It was the second highest viewing group, rather than the very heavy viewers that scored the least.

Consequently, with regard to any postulated negative effects, it was concluded that, rather than pointing the accusing finger at TV-viewing, parents and teachers should concern themselves more with heavy VCR use and, in particular, with heavy computer game playing – with which a significant and consistent pattern of negative relationships is beginning to emerge (Roe & Muijs, 1995; 1997).

Multiple mediating factors

One of the most important lessons of Flemish research into children's media use is the central role played by a number of mediating variables. Almost all studies indicate the importance of gender in differentiating all aspects of the media use of children. Most also stress the importance of socio-economic background in general and, in recent studies, the education of the mother in particular. In the past researchers have tended to concentrate on occupational status (and usually only on that of the father) in their analyses of media use. Future research needs to give far more consideration to the role of educational status (and in particular that of the mother). The importance of cognitive, social and biological development for all aspects of children's media use must also be taken into account. The nature, extent and meanings of media use change quickly as children pass through various developmental phases. Consequently, forms of media use which are typical, appropriate and functional at one stage of development may be atypical, inappropriate and dysfunctional at others.

It follows that in all discussions of 'children and media use', it is essential to bear all of these mediating factors in mind. Five-year-olds are not like fifteen-year-olds, the media use of boys and girls – especially in interaction with socio-economic background and ethnic context – differs significantly in almost all important respects, the nature of children's understanding of media contents changes as they get older, and their experiences in school structure their media use in important ways. Thus, without first carefully specifying the age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, level of cognitive development, and educational achievement (to name only the most important factors) of children, it is impossible to make any meaningful generalizations concerning 'children and the media'; indeed, it is probably dangerously misleading even to try.

Note

1. Platform games, also known as platformers, are one of the most widely available computer formats. The main character moves from one level to another, more difficult, level (and so on) which are set in different decors. The 'sprite' (character) continually has to dodge falling objects, holes, and enemies (who have to be fought) and often has to jump from one cloud, rock etc. to another. The character typically moves from left to right on the screen.

   Platform games contain significantly less (graphic) violence than game types such as 'shoot em-ups', 'beat-em-ups' and 'slash-em-ups', are less difficult and more action oriented than puzzle games, and have less sophisticated scrits and less puzzles than role playing and adventure games. They also appear to have less street credibility than the above-mentioned games, and are sometimes considered childish by older (adolescent) users.

   The characters are often drawn in the manner of humorous cartoons (as opposed to the more realistic depiction of characters in adventure games and fighting games), and a lot of cartoon based computer games (such as *Bugs Bunny, Rabbit Rampage*) are of this format. The most well-known games in this format are the *Super Mario* and *Sonic the Hedgehog* series, signature games of Nintendo and Sega.

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Media in the World

The Global Audio-Visual Media Landscape

ROBERT LAMB

UNICEF commissioned Robert Lamb, Director of Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), to conduct studies on the development in audio-visual media. One study was reported in ***The Bigger Picture: Audio-visual survey and recommendations****, February 1997, copyright © United Nations Children's Fund, March 1997. With the permission of UNICEF, we here reproduce Preface, Executive summary, Chapter 1: Main Findings, and Methodology and Sources from the report (whereas Chapter 2: Survey of the Television Broadcasting Landscape 1997-2000 and Chapter 3: Author's Endnote are omitted due to lack of space).*

Preface

You would have to be a modern-day Rip van Winkle to be surprised when told that television is by far the world's powerful mass medium. But you might raise an eyebrow to find out that in 1996 for every ten households on the planet there are seven television sets. Half the world may never have made a telephone call, but the vast majority of humankind now sees television.

Love it or hate it, anyone who is involved in development communications must come to terms with television. Three years ago, UNICEF commissioned Robert Lamb, Director of TVE to conduct a study and make recommendations to UNICEF on how we should be responding to the bewildering pace of development in the audio visual media. UNICEF has fared well by applying a number of those recommendations. But at risk of being overwhelmed by the demands the industry is making upon the organization and unclear about the implications of the digital revolution and all the talk of 'techno-convergence', we commissioned TVE to conduct two more studies: one on the International Children's Day of Broadcasting, the other, an up-date by

Robert Lamb of his study of three years ago that attempts to sketch out the likely developments to the end of the century.

In UNICEF's view, the findings and recommendations are of relevance to other organizations committed to keeping the global public tuned into sustainable development. *The Bigger Picture* draws on the latest industry surveys and benefits from canvassing the views of television executives, producers and distributors. To all those who spared the time to answer TVE's questionnaires and to meet with the researchers, UNICEF extends its gratitude and thanks.

It was no simple task UNICEF set for TVE. It was to take a global view, stare into a crystal ball and detect trends that are relevant to an organization like UNICEF. Unsurprisingly, for every rule, an exception can be found. For example, an executive in an Asian satellite service found that our output was far too controversial while a European producer found the material to be far too bland! Notwithstanding caveats like these, certain global trends are discernible. The main finding is that television is going in two directions at the same time: re-inforcing its position as the quintessential mass medium while providing an outlet for diversity through the myriad of new speciality channels.

The Bigger Picture demystifies a lot of the jargon and is therefore easy reading for the non-specialist. Colleagues in national, international and NGO development assistance agencies will find much information that is useful in deciding how modest budgets can be deployed for maximum impact. I commend the document to you and look forward to receiving any comments you may have.

Morten Giersing
UNICEF, New York
February 1997

Executive summary

- The 1990s have seen television extend its dominance as the global mass medium. Virtually everywhere, television is now cited as the public's first source of information. Seven out every ten households in the world possess a television set – three quarters are outside the OECD countries.
- Television is growing both as a mass and a minority medium. Non-broadcast organizations with a brief to raise awareness of environment and development are presented with new opportunities to tailor their messages to special interest groups, women, children and youth as well as to mass audiences. But as the numbers of channels multiply with digitisation, the demands on poorly financed information divisions will increase exponentially with diminishing returns in terms of the numbers of people reached.

- With extraordinarily few exceptions, the pattern of prime-time television viewing is similar throughout the world – entertainment, live action, sports and news broadcasts. With public service broadcasting on the wane throughout the world, tapping the mass media potential of television means staying in touch with the needs of increasingly ratings-conscious decision-makers in the industry and the independent producers with a strong track-record in delivering popular programming.
- Despite the flourishing of new national services, western television news agencies are the dominant suppliers of, and agenda-setters for, international news and current affairs. Development assistance agencies could take cost-effective steps to increase global coverage in the only factual programming sector scheduled in prime-time on major national TV networks.
- On a strict ratings criterion, development assistance agencies should end their involvement in documentary co-production. But with a rigorous set of rules applied, there remains a strong case for continued involvement in documentary production.
- Children and youth are major targets for the schedulers, but traditionally not of the development assistance agencies. Virtually everywhere expenditures and broadcast hours for children's television are on the increase.
- The new multi-media platforms (CD-ROM, Internet) are not so widely used yet to justify any special effort by the international development agencies.
- Through an out-sourcing strategy, advocacy agencies should be maximising the use of the new non-linear editing and digital cameras to satisfy viewers' preference for home-made and customised programming.
- The biggest-selling consumer item in the world is not the PC but the colour television set. The development of broadcasting mirrors the globalisation of the world economy. Driven by the requirements of advertisers, the first target of providers in the developing world are the middle classes and those that aspire to that status.
- The replacement of the analogue by the digital signal is already happening. But the two technologies will co-exist. The much vaunted second electronic revolution will be a staggered process.
- What viewers watch and when is decided by the schedulers. Despite all the noise about interactive television putting viewers in the driving seat, little has changed. Change will take place first in well-off households with children. Interactive TV is at the experimental stage. Until a simple, affordable tool along the lines of a hand-held remote control comes on the market, interactive TV will remain the plaything of the techno-boffins. The vast majority of viewers could not care less about technology. Unless the advantages are manifestly clear they will stick to what they already have. Meanwhile, most viewers continue to tune into the established national broadcasters.

- Transmission of live events – especially sports events – popular drama and soaps, natural history films and blockbuster movies are how the networks have kept their mass audience share.
- Direct-to-home broadcasting by satellite and the VCR have broken governments' restrictions over what their people watch, but not as radically as many suppose.

Main Findings (Chapter 1)

Television: the pre-eminent global medium

The 1990s have seen television extend its dominance as the global mass medium. Virtually everywhere, television is now cited as the public's first source of information. Seven out every ten households in the world possess a television set – three quarters are outside the OECD countries.

With at least one television set for every six people on the planet, television broadcasting is the single most important means for development assistance agencies to deliver messages to a global public. Only a handful of small countries are without a domestic broadcaster. But every country is under the footprint of one or another satellite broadcaster. Even in many low income countries, television is no longer a medium for the middle classes alone. According to the International Telecommunications Union, the global information industry generated US$1,425 billion world-wide of which about US$300 billion in 1994 was accounted for by the audio-visual sector.

This paper finds that the trends outlined by TVE in a 1994 UNICEF- sponsored study are being realized. The channel expansion, hours of television watched and increase in television ownership have been truly astonishing – a 100 per cent increase since the end of the 1980s. The single biggest-selling consumer product in the world is the colour television set. According to Philips, 105 million colour television sets were sold world-wide in 1995.

In 1995 the average American spent more time watching television than listening to the radio, surfing the Internet, reading newspapers or listening to recorded music put together. This is not exceptional – a Pole spends more time watching television than an American; a Malaysian as much as a Dane, or an Italian as much as a Turk.

Virtually every household in the industrialised world owns one or more television sets, with Asia fast catching up. Most remarkable is the rapid expansion in the low income countries where television is frequently watched by communities larger than individual households. There is one TV set for every three homes in India where it is estimated that over 400 million people watched the Hindu series, the *Ramayana*. Vietnam's ownership per household is predicted to rise from 37 per cent now to over 70 per cent in just two years. In China, television is in at least 280 million homes, with 60,000 colour television sets being bought each day.

World-wide one in five households are hooked up to cable or satellite television.

One in four households owns a video recorder. In schools and colleges – every educational institution in Botswana is equipped with a VCR – video is an essential educational aid. Increasingly civil society organizations use video for campaigning and awareness raising.

The pattern of expansion in television and VCR ownership is repeated in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arab-speaking countries. Only in the shanty-towns and rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa is television not expected to develop into a mass medium by 2000.

The most unexpected finding is that globalisation of the economy is not for the most part being played out in the content of programming. Most of the 1.6 billion or so TV sets are showing home-grown programming in national languages. "Everywhere, the demand is for local programming in local languages", is a recent comment by Rupert Murdoch, Chairman of News Corporation.

TVE finds there is an overwhelming case for development assistance organizations to invest more resources in television within a strategy designed to utilise the 'points of leverage' in broadcasting.

The broadcasting paradox

Television is growing both as a mass and a minority medium. Non-broadcast organizations with a brief to raise awareness of environment and development are presented with new opportunities to tailor their messages to special interest groups, women, children and youth as well as to mass audiences. But as the numbers of channels multiply with digitisation, the demands on poorly financed information divisions will increase exponentially with diminishing returns in terms of the numbers of people reached.

One of the most important findings of this study is the success of national broadcasters in holding on to the majority of viewers.

This applies to every country, poor or prosperous, regardless of how many channels are available via cable, direct-to-home satellite, wireless cable or terrestrial transmission via the spectrum.

In Germany, five broadcasters account for three quarters of the audience share. Mexico's four Televisa channels account for 80 per cent of the viewers. The three SABC channels take 83 per cent of the viewers in South Africa. In the UK the four main channels have a 90 per cent share. Even in the USA, with a longer exposure to multi-channel television than any other country, 70 per cent of prime-time viewing is on the four main networks.

On a global measurement, the audience share of the transcontinental broadcasters is feeble by comparison. Satellite up-linked television received direct-to-home or relayed by cable has only succeeded where it has customised its output for domestic audiences. A prime example is Zee TV. Offering a menu of slick programming aimed at a youthful up-market Indian viewership, it claims an audience of 80 million on the sub-continent.

Advertising drives the US$300 billion global television industry. And advertisers are finding it worth their while to reach for niche audiences via the themed channels.

The development of these speciality channels is the phenomenon of the 1990s. Operating on slim budgets, their demand for programming to fit their brief will increase geometrically as digitisation takes place. This development could distract agencies seeking to reach the biggest audiences.

Aid and development agencies should consider prioritising in a draconian fashion, targeting the national networks and broadcasters/producers with a successful proven track record of high ratings and successful international sales.

What are viewers watching?

With extraordinarily few exceptions, the pattern of prime-time viewing is similar throughout the world – entertainment, live action, sports and news broadcasts. With public service broadcasting on the wane throughout the world, tapping the mass media potential of television means staying in touch with the needs of increasingly ratings-conscious decision-makers in the television industry and the independent producers with a strong track-record in delivering popular programming.

Live events – especially sports – home-made popular drama (telenovelas, soaps etc.), and blockbuster movies are how the national networks have retained their audience share.

Despite all the predictions of convergence and interactivity, television viewing remains a passive activity. The key players are the schedulers, programme commissioners and a handful of highly-regarded production companies – an elite group who decide what viewers will see and when. These are the quintessential points of leverage in the industry who number in their hundreds.

Through their pathway to mass audiences they can powerfully influence decision-making. A myth is that by reaching policy/decision-makers with tailored programming, policies will be changed to favour sustainable development. Programmes that warrant prime-time coverage, generating national debate involving the general public must be the main target for organizations seeking to influence decision-makers.

With the public service ethic in broadcasting in steep decline, television is increasingly a world of cut-throat competition with tabloid formats becoming ever more popular. Almost exclusively stations are concerned with ratings or with targeting the special interest categories. They are especially concerned to attract youthful (14-30 years) viewer.

Encouragingly, this report finds there is a fund of goodwill among the commissioners for organizations like UNICEF that implement a sophisticated audio-visual policy. Its work in the field of animation, the professionalism of its ad spots and B Rolls and experience in brokering co-productions, give organizations like UNICEF a sound basis on which to achieve more coverage.

TVE recommends that staying in touch with the elite decision-makers in television, being sympathetic to their needs, providing stories and contacts and, from time to time, start-up co-finance, should be the priority for any agency seeking to step up coverage on television. Sympathetic tabloid TV journalists should be sought out. Agencies should give priority to maintaining a television VIP listing and to nurturing these contacts on an individual basis. Given the dominant share of English-speaking programming in the international sales market, special attention should be paid to the North American and UK commissioners.

The factual exception

Despite the flourishing of new national services, Western television news agencies are the dominant suppliers of, and agenda-setters for, international news and current affairs. Development assistance agencies could take cost-effective steps to increase global coverage in the only factual programming sector scheduled in prime-time on major national TV networks.

A recent study of news coverage in a cross-section of 35 countries found that the hegemony of the Western television news agencies is even greater than when UNESCO sponsored the New World Information Order in the 1970s.

A European Union sponsored survey found that 80 per cent of the public in the EU cite television news and current affairs programming as their primary source of information. Thematic magazine programmes also make the prime-time schedules.

The two most frequent pleas among news and current affairs editors contacted during this study were: topical story-led items that respect editorial independence and stories that try to be relevant to national audiences. Though national TV services focus mostly on domestic and near-neighbour stories, they rely heavily on the big three London based agencies (two USA owned) for international coverage. These agencies also supply the 30 or so successful satellite news broadcasters like CNN, BBC World and Deutsche Welle. About 90 per cent of the world's non-domestic generated news items pass through London.

The multi-media environment enables non-broadcast organizations to plan integrated television, radio and print campaigns. A possible model is one TV agency's highly professional Global Beltway which combines television news features, regional tailoring, stills and on-screen information.

Bi-lateral agencies or international organizations with a need to communicate to a particular country or region should work with national broadcasters. The most effective means to achieve global coverage is via the international TV news agencies. The route preferred by most broadcasters is via trusted independent producers.

The documentary conundrum

On a strict ratings criterion, development assistance agencies should end their involvement in documentary co-production. But with a rigorous set of rules applied, there remains a strong case for continued involvement in documentary production.

Documentaries have all but disappeared from the prime-time scheduling of major national broadcasters, including the public service broadcasters who have been forced to go downmarket in the ratings wars. But the tabloid format does not necessarily mean any loss in quality of coverage.

One-off documentaries and series in a tabloid as well as a blue chip format can still have a measurable impact on public opinion in inverse proportion to the numbers who see the programmes. There is also a significant international sales market not least because this kind of factual programming has 'shelf-life' and can be customised to meet national and regional broadcasters' requirements. Series and other forms of 'bulk' programming are most in demand, with single 'one off' documentaries difficult to place. The success of the Discovery Channel throughout the world is based on repackaging to suit national/regional audience preferences. Crucially, the documentary format can also be edited to meet cultural and religious sensitivities.

New technologies – digital hi-8 cameras and non-linear editing equipment – also offer the opportunity for the independent producer to make programmes to international broadcast standard at a fraction of the cost of a decade ago. The new digitised programme-making hardware and channels may yet offer the best hope for consistent and fearless in-depth coverage of environment and development.

TVE proposes that agencies should only support documentary production when all or most of the following criteria are fulfilled: commissions are within programme strands with proven above average audience ratings for factual programming; themes are directly relevant to their mission; co-production involving at least one or more major broadcaster; submission of promotional and distribution work plans; generous rights assignment to the agency for international distribution in whole or in part, in perpetuity.

The only exceptions should be: when the agency has a pressing policy need to see a programme broadcast in a particular country and/or territory; coverage of a subject (for example water or sanitation) with little media potential but which accords with an agency priority (there will always be reason for advocacy organizations to swim against the media tide).

Reaching the younger viewer

Children and youth are major targets for the schedulers, but traditionally not of the development assistance agencies. Virtually everywhere expenditures and broadcast hours are on the increase.

There is a case to be made that far too little effort has gone into supporting programming aimed at 10-30 year olds. There is persuasive evidence that the best way to reach adults is through the younger family members – especially in cultures where family viewing is the norm. Children's news programme commissioners, for example, are far less resistant to directly featuring the work of an agency.

The needs of the child and youthful viewer are wildly different to adult programming. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly recognises the right to children's self-expression.

A recent survey of 62 broadcasters revealed that by far the biggest expenditures and audiences were achieved by the national broadcasters. Just five countries – France, Australia, Canada, UK and the USA – dominated the international sales market for children and youth programming.

Most popular are live events and animations. Magazine programmes featuring young presenters and fast-moving on-site formats are avidly watched by youthful audiences. In the contacts made during the research for the two UNICEF-commissioned studies, TVE found that the producers of children and youth programming were the category most open to new ideas.

Preliminary contacts made during this survey indicate that an investment in human and financial resources to this fast-expanding area would pay dividends not only in reaching the next generation of decision-makers but in using their influence with parents to alter lifestyles and pay more attention to environment and development issues.

Multi-media and all that

The new multi-media platforms are not so widely used yet to justify any special effort by the international funders In the global perspective, multi-media applications – CD-Rom, PC games etc. – are the playthings of relatively few better-off households. TVE found that the 'hype' surrounding the Internet, multi-media, 'techno-convergence' and so on was distracting attention (and scarce resources) away from the fact that tiny numbers actually know how to use the new interactive platforms.

Organizations like UNICEF risk losing sight of the bigger picture if they were to decide to invest in interactive software production. Their role should be confined to selling imagery and information only to the producers of multi-media software.

Digitisation and new developments such as Web-TV or video-on-demand (VoD) may usher in the much talked about interactive television revolution (i.e. the television, telephone and PC as an integrated unit). But no company has yet put on the market an affordable navigator to bring an end to the era of passive viewing.

Nor is there any evidence of any strong demand from the viewers. A RAI working paper to the October 1996 United Nations World Television Forum states: "...despite around thirty VoD experiments world-wide, involving thousands of families, the results have not suggested great commercial potential."

TVE's findings are that it will be the end of the century possibly later – before the development assistance community needs to develop a strategy in this area.

TVE recommends that involvement with multi-media be restricted to the start up of an Internet film catalogue. As the decade draws to a close, the on-line catalogue will become a major vehicle for promoting co-productions and independently made audio-visual software on themes relevant to agencies' mission.

Utilising the new programme-making technologies

Through an out-sourcing strategy, advocacy agencies should be maximising the use of the new non-linear editing and digital cameras to satisfy viewers' preference for home-made and customised programming.

The findings of TVE's two surveys, the pattern of demand for programming featured in its six Moving Pictures catalogues, as well as five regional television workshops convened by TVE since 1994, indicate that in order to make an impact, a systematic versioning policy must be introduced to satisfy national audience preferences.

New technological developments render this a cost effective objective. Programmes can be versioned (e.g. voice dubbing, sub-titling, video introductions, insertion of local stories etc.) at relatively little cost. One instance is the Spanish versioning of 12 TVE Moving Pictures programmes for US$7000 in Mexico.

Agencies such as WWF and UNICEF report great success with video news releases and 'B' roll tapes that enable stations to make their own versions. But as one Dutch producer told us, TV stations are 'lazy' and 'overworked'. They are far more likely to use video programmes if an effort is made to customise the output.

The TVE/ICDB evaluation showed that, with a few exceptions, hard-pressed field offices of even a well organized and funded organization like UNICEF cannot be expected to undertake this task. But throughout the world, there are facilities houses and broadcasters highly practised in customising programming. Crucially, a decentralised approach enables an organization to tailor the output to accord with national and regional cultural and religious sensitivities. Drawing on TVE's own experience, far more trust should be placed in indigenous producers in the South and economies in transition to make and version programming to meet local preferences. If necessary quality control can be exercised by tried and trusted independent production outfits.

Organizations with a public advocacy mission should set aside an element of its annual information budget to finance versioning. More effort should go into tapping production capacities in the non-OECD countries.

Methodology and Sources

The research for this survey was conducted by TVE's director, Robert Lamb over a six-week period (October/November 1996).

TVE reviewed the latest publications:

Zenith Media Television in Europe and Asia to 2005; Zenith Media, Bridge House, London, 1996

Television Business International (TBI) Yearbook 1997; 21st Century Publications, Pearson Professional Ltd., London, 1996.

Screen Digest, Screen Digest Ltd.; London, published monthly.

The Digital Broadcast Revolution; Broadcasting Corporation, London.

Interactive TV: A Revolution in Global Broadcasting; Financial Times, Corporation, London, 1996.

Extending Choice in the Digital Age; British Broadcasting Corporation, London, 1996.

Study on the Introduction of Terrestrial Television; Convergent Decisions Group, The Mews, Putney Common, London, 1996.

Television in a Changing World; RAI Working Papers – 4 vols – for UN TV Forum, November 1996.

Watching the World – Television and Audience Engagement with Developing Countries (Third World and Environment Broadcasting Project), International Broadcasting Trust, London, 1996.

References are made in the text to other published sources. TVE conducted person-to-person meetings and telephone interviews with over 80 key players in the television industry and sent out over 150 questionnaires.

TVE drew upon its ICDB (International Children's Day of Broadcasting) Evaluation of June 1996. TVE also contacted over 40 Video Resource Centres (VRCs) in the South and NIS countries.

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Table 1. Television and Video (1996)

	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Penetration Satellite (%)
AFRICA						
Algeria	1	0	79	•	0	•
Angola	1	0	7	•	0	•
Benin	1	0	6	•	0	•
Botswana	1	0	17	•	0	•
Burkina Faso	3	0	6	30	0	(.)
Burundi	1	3	2	•	0	•
Cameroon	1	0	24	19	(.)	3
Cape Verde	1	0	3	•	0	•
Central African Rep.	1	0	5	•	0	1
Chad	1	0	1	•	0	•
Congo	1	0	7	•	0	•
Côte d'Ivoire	2	2	60	•	0	•
Djibouti	1	0	44	•	0	•
Egypt	9[1]	0	109	18	(.)	•
Equatorial Guinea	1	0	10	•	0	•
Eritrea	1	0	(.)	•	0	•
Ethiopia	1	0	4	•	0	•
Gabon	1	0	38	•	0	•
Gambia	1	0	•	66	0	(.)
Ghana	2	0	89	45	0	•
Guinea	1	0	8	•	0	•
Guinea-Bissau	1	0	•	•	0	•
Kenya	4	9	11	65	1	(.)
Lesotho	1	0	10	•	0	•
Libya	1	0	100	•	0	•
Madagascar	2	8	20	•	0	•
Malawi	1	0	•	•	0	•
Mali	1	16	1	50	0	*1*
Mauritania	1	0	25	*25*	0	*2*
Mauritius	5[2]	2	222	42	0	(.)
Morocco	1	1	79	8	0	3
Mozambique	2	0	4	•	6	5
Namibia	1	5	23	52	0	(.)
Niger	1	5	5	•	0	•
Nigeria	3	1	38	21	•	3
Sao Tome & Principe	1	0	162	•	0	•
Sénegal	1	1	37	36	10	*1*
Seychelles	1	0	88	*67*	0	0
Sierra Leone	1	0	11	40	0	1
South Africa	3	5	101	32	18	(.)
Sudan	1	1	80	•	0	•
Swaziland	1	0	20	•	0	•
Tanzania	1	0	21	28	0	(.)
Togo	1	4	8	•	0	(.)
Tunisia	5[3]	1	81	•	0	3

... Television and Video

	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Penetration Satellite (%)
Uganda	3	0	11	70	0	1
Zaire	1	0	2	*	0	*
Zambia	4[4]	6	27	*5*	0	1
Zimbabwe	2	0	27	6	0	1

* Data not available.
(.) Equal or less than half the unit shown.

[1] Including 3 local channels.
[2] Including 2 pay-TV.
[3] Including 2 relays.
[4] Including 3 pay-TV.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers and numbers in italics refer to minimum estimates.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

ASIA

	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Penetration Satellite (%)
Afghanistan	1	0	10	*	0	*
Armenia	1	0	225	*	0	*
Azerbaijan	3	0	*	*	0	*
Bahrain	5	0	430	*	*	*
Bangladesh	1	0	16	4	0	1
Brunei Darussalam	2	0	241	*87*	0	*
Cambodia	2	0	8	*	0	*
China	18	(.)	189	*25*	11	1
Cyprus	13	1	320	82	(.)	5
Georgia	2	0	*	*	*	*
Hong Kong	4	35	291	*76*	*6*	*17*
India	19	17	40	*8*	26	(.)
Indonesia	7	0	62	29	0	4
Iran	5	0	62	38	0	0
Iraq	1	0	75	*	0	(.)
Israel	6	214	275	*68*	59	*(.)*
Japan	9	2[1]	681	*80*	8	28
Jordan	3	5	76	*	0	*22*
Kazakstan	4	0	*	*	*	*
Korea, Dem.	3	0	43	*	0	*
Korea, Rep.	4	0	323	*74*	5	2
Kuwait	3	1	380	*79*	*	11
Kyrgyzstan	2	0	*	*	0	(.)
Lao Rep.	2	0	8	*	0	*
Lebanon	10	0	360	*	*	3
Malaysia	4	5	157	41	0	*
Maldives	1	0	25	*	0	*
Mongolia	3	0	42	*	0	*
Myanmar	2	0	5	*	0	*
Nepal	1	0	5	*	*	*
Oman	2	1	662	*22*	0	*
Pakistan	3	8	18	*19*	0	*
Philippines	6	50	48	*	6	*

... Television and Video

	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Penetration Satellite (%)
Qatar	2	24	398	*35*	17	0
Saudi Arabia	2	0	255	43	0	19
Singapore	4	43	390	84	5	(.)
Sri Lanka	7	0	50	*	0	*(.)*
Syria	2	1	62	*	0	*
Tajikistan	1	*	*	*	*	*
Thailand	2	8	117	*20*	*2*	3
Turkey	18	1	181	17	3	2
Turkmenistan	1	0	180	*	*	*
United Arab Emirates	10	30	107	*65*	3	40
Uzbekistan	1	0	190	*	*	*
Viet Nam	2	0	28	*	0	*
Yemen	2	0	280	*	0	16

* Data not available.
(.) Less than half the unit shown.

[1] Nearly 400 digital satellite channels are expected by 1998.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers and numbers in italics refer to minimum estimates.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

OCEANIA

Australia	16	8	489	80	3	*
Cook Islands	1	0	179	*	0	*
Fiji	3	0	17	75	0	*
New Zealand	4	5	510	72	25	(.)
Papua New Guinea	1	0	3	*	0	*
Vanuatu	1	0	13	*	0	*

* Data not available.
(.) Equal or less than half the unit shown.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers and numbers in italics refer to minimum estimates.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda	1	16	370	55-65	*20*	75-100
Argentina	5	312	219	43	53	*(.)*
Aruba	1	31	277	*	*75*	*10*
Bahamas	1	0	226	*	*20*	*
Barbados	1	6	279	86	*0*	*
Belize	3	56	167	*	32	*
Bermuda	3	0	924	30	*32*	*
Bolivia	5	0	113	*	*	*
Brazil	92[1]	253	209	16	8	8
Cayman Islands	2	20	200	*	45	15

… Television and Video

	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Satellite (%)
Chile	5	60	211	35	25	*
Colombia	5	0	118	*	*	*
Costa Rica	10	46	142	_21_	_4_	_1_
Cuba	3	0	171	*	0	*
Dominica	2	20	75	*	_33_	*
Dominican Republic	10	40	90	12	5	2
Ecuador	10	42	88	35	4	1
El Salvador	1	0	443	31	3	1
French Guiana	3	1	181	*	*	*
Grenada	3	26	337	_25_	_50_	_2_
Guadelope	2	0	262	*	*	*
Guatemala	7	0	53	60	15	0
Guyana	2	0	39	*	0	*
Haiti	2	0	5	*	_19_	*
Honduras	10	168	78	32	11	0
Jamaica	2	0	142	_42_	15	6
Martinique	2	0	137	*	*	*
Mexico	8	24	163	58	13	1
Netherlands Antilles[2]	2	23	334	*	8	*
Nicaragua	6	183	67	_8_	_4_	_1_
Panama	4	0	170	_16_	_3_	_2_
Paraguay	2	0	83	*	*	*
Peru	8	0	99	*	3	3
Puerto Rico	9	104	267	_45_	*	*
St Kitts & Nevis	1	68	213	*	_71_	*
St Lucia	2	40	189	*	23	1
St Vincent & Grenadines	1	0	147[3]	*	*	*
Suriname	7	0	141	*	*	*
Trinidad & Tobago	3	38	317	*	*	_2_
U.S. Virgin Island	3	72	636	_28_	_49_	_3_
Uruguay	4	0	232	*	*	*
Venezuela	5	110	164	40	39	*

* Data not available.

(.) Equal or less than half the unit shown.

[1] + 90 affiliates.

[2] Curacao and Bonaire.

[3] St Vincent.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers and numbers in italics refer to minimum estimates.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada	39	47[1]	685	83	75	1
United States	345	387	817	81	66	6

[1] Including 1 preview channel.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

... Television and Video

EUROPE	Number of terrestrial TV channels	Number of satel./cable/pay TV channels	Estimated number of TV receivers/ 1,000 inh. (1994)	Video access (%)	Penetration Cable TV (%)	Penetration Satellite (%)
Albania	1	0	91	*	0	6[1]
Austria	2	0	480	69	37	17
Belarus	2	0	226	12	*	*
Belgium	8	17	453	46	94	6[1]
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1	0	*	*	0	*
Bulgaria	4	0	363	30	17	4
Croatia	5	0	353	*	(.)	46
Czech Republic	4	60-80	478	27	18	17
Denmark	5	2	539	*64*	23	13
Estonia	3	50	367	10[2]	29	22
Finland	5	6	511	*56*	40	*2*
France	12	48	591	*64*	7	*5*
Germany	14	15	560	*59*	48	30
Greece	5	0	206	*50*	(.)	(.)
Hungary	4	3	429	*35*	37	11
Iceland	2	6	350	*	*1*	*3*
Ireland	2	0	302	59	47	*6*
Italy	12	57	437	*48*	*	*3*
Latvia	3	24	465	16	7	11
Lithuania	5	0	386	*9*	*8*	*2*
Luxembourg	14	2	374	*	88	*2*
Macedonia TFYR	4	0	166	*	0	*
Malta	1	1	747	60	*12*	2
Moldovia, Rep of.	1	0	271	*	*	*
Monaco	2	0	741	*	12	*
Netherlands	9	25	494	*68*	93	4
Norway	3	11	428	*49*	35	13
Poland	5	46	308	59	23	16
Portugal	7	0	321	52	0	*3*
Romania	8[3]	0	201	37	31	4
Russian Federation	11	0	377	*	14[4]	3[4]
Serbia & Montenegro	2	0	*	*80*	8	10
Slovakia	3	0	474	*24*	18	5
Slovenia	4	0	320	10	45	19
Spain	12	9	402	*58*	4	*2*
Sweden	3	16	475	72	47	13
Switzerland	5	4	416	*65*	83	3
Ukraine	6	0	340	*	*	*
United Kingdom	15	64	439	*74*	7	*18*

* Data not available.
(.) Less than half the unit shown.

[1] 1995.
[2] Among Estonians.
[3] Including 1 satellite.
[4] European Russia.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers and numbers in italics refer to minimum estimates.

Sources: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97* and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

Table 2. Children's & Youth's Television Programmes (1996)

Channel	Hours broadcast a week[1]	Hours purchased per year	Budget spent on live action (%)	Budget spent on animation (%)	Budget spent on acquisitions from abroad (%)	Main countries from which programs are purchased
AUSTRALIA						
AUSTRALIA						
ABC	24.5	300	40	60	80	**UK, Canada, USA**
Nine Network	5.0	13	80	20	0	Australia
AUSTRIA						
ORF	36.0	•	40	60	•	Germany, USA
BELGIUM						
BRTN	18.5	•	•	•	43	Europe, Australia, USA
CANADA						
CBC	16.0	•	•	•	•	•
SRC	25.0	•	70	30	15	Canada, USA, France, UK
TVOntario	51.0	1,500	75	25	40	USA, Australia, UK
DENMARK						
DR	13.0	200	100	0	10	UK, Sweden, France, USA
FINLAND						
YLE - TV1	8.0	•	17	83[3]	•	**UK, Canada, France, Germany**
YLE - TV2	•	•	90	10	99	UK, Poland, Germany, Australia
YLE - FST	3.5	90	•	•	7	**UK, Sweden, Netherl., Canada**
MTV3	5.0	230	0	100	95	USA, UK, Netherlands, Finland
FRANCE						
TF1	17.0	•	30	70	60	**USA, Italy, UK**
France 2	6.0	•	•	•	100[3]	USA, UK
France 3	25.0	350	15	85	30	**USA**[4]
Canal Plus	13.0	70	0	100	•	France, USA, Canada, UK, Italy
M6	5.0	•	•	•	•	•

... Children's and Youth's Television Programmes

Channel	Hours broadcast a week[1]	Hours purchased per year	Budget spent on live action (%)	Budget spent on animation (%)	Budget spent on acquisitions from abroad (%)	Main countries from which programs are purchased
GERMANY						
ZDF	14.0	•	45	35	50	UK, Australia, Canada
NDR	12.0	•	50	50	•	•
RTL	12.0	•	10	90	75	USA, France
Sat 1	7.0	•	100	0	•	USA, Australia
Pro 7	37.5	•	0	100	•	USA, UK, France, Germany
IRELAND						
RTE	29.0	•	15	85	•	Australia, UK, USA
ITALY						
Rai 1	18.0	•	40	60	•	USA, UK, France, Spain
JAPAN						
NTV	15.0	•	0	100	•	USA
NETHERLANDS						
VPRO	4.0	195	•	•	•	UK, Scandinavia
RTL4	20.0	728	30	70	90	USA, Canada, UK
RTL5	5.0	•	30	70	90	USA, Canada, UK
NORWAY						
NRK	8.0	160	70	30	20	UK, Netherlands, France, Germany, Canada, Scandinavia
PORTUGAL						
SIC	10.0	600	0	100	100	USA
SPAIN						
TVE	32.0	•	89	11	•	USA, EU
Antena 3 TV	24.5	•	15	85	95	USA, Canada, Japan
Tele5	19.0	•	0	100	•	•
Canal Plus	4.0	202	26	74[5]	•	USA, Spain, France, UK

... Children's and Youth's Television Programmes

Channel	Hours broadcast a week[1]	Hours purchased per year	Budget spent on live action (%)	Budget spent on animation (%)	Budget spent on acquisitions from abroad (%)	Main countries from which programs are purchased
SOUTH AFRICA						
SABC1	40.0	•	40	60	60	•
SWEDEN						
SVT (Ch 1)	15.5	124[8]	•	•	10	Nordic countries, UK, USA, Germany, Netherlands, Czech Rep., Slovakia
TV4	6.5	200	25	75	35	**USA, UK, Australia, France**
SWITZERLAND						
TSI	8.0	150	40	60	95	**USA, UK, Italy, Other**
DRS	7.0	200	90	10-30	•	USA, France, Australia, Germany
TSR	10.0	620	50	50	100	**Europe, USA**
UK						
BBC	28.0	250	94	6	5	**Australia, Canada, Europe, USA**
ITV	11.0	•	•	•	6	Australia, USA, France
GMTV	4.5	•	•	•	•	**UK, USA**
Channel 4	12.0[7]	500	60	40	35	USA, Australia, Canada, UK
Sky One	29.0	400	40	60	70	**USA, Australia, France, Canada**
Disney Channel	60.0	•	60	40	•	USA
USA						
ABC	5.0	•	•	•	0	USA
CBS	4.5	•	•	•	0	USA
NBC	2.5	0	100	0	•	**USA**
WB Network	9.0	13	0	100	0	USA
UPN	2.0	•	0	100	0	•

Kids-Only Channels

Channel	Hours broadcast a week[1]	Hours purchased per year	Budget spent on live action (%)	Budget spent on animation (%)	Budget spent on acquisitions from abroad (%)	Main countries from which programs are purchased
AUSTRALIA						
Nickelodeon	100.0	700	50	50	•	**USA, France, Spain, Australia,**

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... Children's and Youth's Television Programmes. Kids-Only Channels.

Channel	Hours broadcast a week[1]	Hours purchased per year	Budget spent on live action (%)	Budget spent on animation (%)	Budget spent on acquisitions from abroad (%)	Main countries from which programs are purchased
CANADA						
YTV	107.0[8]	*	52	48	21	Canada, UK, France, Australia, USA
FRANCE						
Canal J	93.0	860	40	60	40	France, UK, Canada, Australia, USA
GERMANY						
Nickelodeon	98.0	400	*	*	*	UK, France, Italy, USA, Canada, Australia
ITALY						
Junior	56.0	150-200	80	20	20	USA, Australia, Germany, France, UK, Japan
NETHERLANDS						
Kindernet	25.0	450	20	80	80	USA, France, Australia, Belgium, UK, Germany
SPAIN						
Minimax	91.0	1,800	20	75	*	EU (Spain, France, UK), USA
UK						
Nickelodeon	99.0	*	35	65	85	USA, UK, Australia, Canada
USA						
Fox Kids Network	19.0	117	*	*	*	USA
Nickelodeon	100.5	*	*	*	*	USA, Canada

* Data not available.

[1] Rounded into nearest half hour. [2] 3-4 new series/year. [3] Acquisitions only. [4] Mostly Warner series. [5] Refer to hours (52 hours live action/150 hours animation) rather than budget. [6] Budget for Stockholm region. [7] More in school vacations. [8] Just children's, YTV's programming hours are 5am-3am daily.

Note: All of the information in this table/survey is compiled from questionnaires completed by broadcasters. Networks which are not featured include those which did not return a completed questionnaire to Television Business International by press time, and others which do not air a significant quantity of children's program.

Source: The table is based on data from *TBI Yearbook 97*.

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Abbreviations - Television

ABC	American Broadcasting Company
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRTN	Belgian Radio and Television Station of thé Flemish Community
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
DR	Danmarks Radio (Danish Broadcasting Corporation)
DRS	Germanspeaking TV channel of the SSR-SRG (Société suisse de radio diffusion et télévision - Schweizerische Radio und Fernsehgesellschaft)
GMTV	TV Breakfast Service
ITV	Independent Television
M6	Métropole Télévision
MTV3	Mainos Television Oy
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NDR	Norddeutscher Rundfunk
NRK	Norsk Riksringkasting (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation)
NTV	Nippon Television Network Corporation
ORF	Österreichischer Rundfunk
Pro 7	Program 7
RAI	Radiotelevisione Italia
RTE	Radio Telefis Eireann
RTL	Radio Télé-Luxembourg
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
Sat 1	Satelite 1
SIC	Sociedade Independente de Communicacão SA
SRC	Société Radio Canada
SVT	Sveriges Television (Swedish Broadcasting Corporation)
TF 1	Télévision France 1
TSI	Televisione Svizzera di Lingua Italiana
TSR	Télévision Suisse Romande
TVE	Televison Espanola
UPN	United Paramount Network
VPRO	Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep
WB	Warner Brothers
YLE	Yleisradio OY (Finnish Broadcasting Company)
YLE/ FST	Yleisradion OY/Finlands Svenska Television (Finnish Broadcasting Company/The Swedish Television of Finland)
YTV	Youth Television
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen

Table 3. Cinema Screens

Country and year	Screens per million population
Iceland 1996	187
Estonia 1995	170
Sweden 1996	132
Turkey 1994	121
USA 1996	112
Latvia 1995	108
Norway 1996	90
Czech Republic 1995	79
China 1995	79
France 1996	77
New Zealand 1995	74
Australia 1996	71
Switzerland 1996	69
Italy 1996	64
Finland 1996	63
Denmark 1996	62
Canada 1994	61
Ireland 1996	61
Spain 1996	59
Hungary 1995	58
Austria 1996	52
Israel 1995	52
Slovena 1995	50
Germany 1996	49
Lithuania 1995	49
Belgium 1996	43
Slovakia 1996	43
Faroe Islands 1994	42
Luxembourg 1996	41
Singapore 1994	38
United Kingdom 1996	38
Taiwan 1995	36
Croatia 1995	35
Hong Kong 1995	31
Cyprus 1995	30
Portugal 1996	29
Netherlands 1996	28
Malta 1994	27
Greece 1996	26
Lebanon 1994	23
Poland 1996	21
Uruguay 1996	21
Bahrain 1994	20
Bulgaria 1995	20
Romania 1996	19
Macedonia 1994	18
Philippines 1995	18
Mexico 1996	17
Russia 1995	15
Malaysia 1994	14

Note: The countries are ranked by latest available year.
The numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers.

Source: The table is based on data from *Screen Digest*, August 1997.

Table 4. Personal Computers and Internet Users (1994)

Country	Personal computers per 100 people	Internet users per 10,000 people
AFRICA		
Algeria	•	(.)
Egypt	•	(.)
Guinea	•	(.)
Nigeria	(.)	•
Sénegal	1	•
South Africa	2	37
Tunisia	1	(.)
Zambia	•	(.)
Zimbabwe	•	(.)
ASIA		
Armenia	•	(.)
Azerbaijan	•	(.)
China	•	(.)
Cyprus	•	7
Hong Kong	11	117
India	0	(.)
Indonesia	0	0
Iran	•	(.)
Israel 8	135	
Japan	12	13
Kazakstan	•	(.)
Korea, Rep.	11	22
Kuwait	•	7
Malaysia	3	5
Mongolia	(.)	•
Philippines	1	(.)
Saudi Arabia	3	(.)
Singapore	15	103
Thailand	1	2
Turkey	1	2
OCEANIA		
Australia	22	487
Fiji	•	(.)
New Zealand	19	486
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN		
Argentina	1	2
Brazil 1	(.)	
Chile	3	12
Colombia	•	2
Ecuador	•	2
Jamaica	•	2
Mexico	2	4
Nicaragua	•	1
Panama	•	(.)
Peru	•	(.)

… Personal Computers and Internet Users

Country	Personal computers per 100 people	Internet users per 10,000 people
Suriname	(.)	*
Uruguay	*	3
Venezuela	1	1
NORTH AMERICA		
Canada	18	353
United States	30	671
EUROPE		
Austria	11	206
Belarus	*	(.)
Belgium	13	102
Bulgaria	*	1
Croatia	*	13
Czech Republic	3	62
Denmark	19	276
Estonia	*	50
Finland	16	772
France	14	89
Germany	14	141
Greece	3	21
Hungary	3	46
Iceland	*	979
Ireland	14	97
Italy	7	30
Latvia	*	13
Lithuania	*	2
Luxembourg	*	84
Netherlands	16	319
Norway	19	633
Poland	2	17
Portugal	5	34
Romania	*	1
Russian Federation	1	1
Slovakia	*	15
Slovenia	*	50
Spain	7	40
Sweden	17	489
Switzerland	29	398
Ukraine	0	1
United Kingdom	15	228

* Data not available.
(.) Equal or less than half the unit shown.

Note: Numbers are rounded into nearest whole numbers.

Source: The table is based on data from *Human Development Report 1997.*

Table 5. Telephone Main Lines and Internet Host Computers (1996)

Economy	Main telephone lines ('000)	Teledensity per 100 inh.	Internet hosts ('000)	Host density per 100 inh.	Internet hosts per 100 lines
Austria	*3,820.0*	*46.6*	91.9	1.12	*2.41*
Belgium	4,725.5	46.5	64.6	0.64	1.37
Denmark	3,251.0	61.5	106.5	2.01	3.28
Finland	2,813.0	54.8	283.5	5.52	*10.08*
France	32,900.0	56.3	245.5	0.42	0.75
Germany	44,100.0	53.4	721.8	0.87	1.64
Greece	5,328.7	50.6	15.9	0.15	0.30
Ireland	1,390.0	38.3	27.1	0.75	*1.95*
Italy	25,259.0	44.0	149.6	0.26	0.59
Luxembourg	244.2	58.8	3.5	0.84	*1.44*
Netherlands	8,431.0	54.3	270.5	1.74	3.21
Portugal	3,724.3	37.5	26.1	0.26	0.70
Spain	15,412.8	39.3	110.0	0.28	0.71
Sweden	6,032.0	67.6	233	2.61	3.86
United Kingdom	*29,700.0*	*50.4*	591.6	1.00	*1.99*
EU	187,131.5	50.0	2,941.0	0.79	1.57
Australia	9,500.0	*51.9*	514.8	2.81	5.42
Canada	18,057.1	60.3	603.3	2.01	3.34
Czech Republic	2,817.3	27.1	41.2	0.40	1.45
Hungary	2,661.6	26.1	29.9	0.29	1.12
Iceland	155.4	57.6	11.7	4.32	7.51
Japan	*62,300.0*	*49.7*	734.4	0.59	*1.18*
Korea (Rep of.)	19,601.0	43.3	66.3	0.15	0.34
Mexiko	8,826.1	9.6	29.8	0.03	0.34
New Zealand	*1,782.2*	*48.9*	84.5	2.32	*4.7*
Norway	*2,471.1*	*56.3*	171.7	3.91	*6.95*
Poland	6,560.0	16.9	54.5	0.14	0.83
Switzerland	4,547.0	65.4	129.1	1.86	2.84
Turkey	*14,286.5*	22.4	13.2	0.02	*0.09*
United States	*172,000.0*	*64.7*	10,112.9	3.81	*5.88*
Other OECD	325,565.3	45.5	12,597	1.76	3.87
OECD	512,696.8	47.1	15,538	1.43	3.03
Argentina	*6,330.0*	*18.1*	12.7	0.036	0.20
Brazil	13,459.4	8.2	77.1	0.047	0.57
Chile	2,248.0	15.5	15.9	0.109	0.71
China	54,940.0	4.5	19.7	0.002	0.04
Hongkong	3,451.2	54.7	49.2	0.779	*1.42*
India	14,450.0	1.5	3.1	0.000	0.02
Indonesia	4,186.0	2.1	9.6	0.005	0.23
Israel	2,539.1	43.7	38.5	0.663	1.52
Malaysia	3,771.3	18.3	4.2	0.020	0.11
Philippines	1,787.0	2.6	3.6	0.005	0.20
Russia	*25,980.0*	*17.8*	69.2	0.047	*0.27*
Singapore	1,563.0	51.3	28.9	0.949	1.85
South Africa	4,258.6	10.3	99.3	0.240	2.33
Taiwan, China	10,010.6	46.6	34.7	0.161	0.35
Thailand	4,200.2	7.0	9.2	0.015	0.22
Venezuela	2,666.9	11.7	2.4	0.011	0.09
Non-OECD	155,841.3	5.2	477	0.02	0.31
Major economies	668,538.1	16.4	16,016	0.39	2.40
WORLD	741,000.0	12.8	16,146	0.28	2.18

Note: Numbers in italics refer to estimates.

Source: International Telecommunication Union, ITU/97-15.

Table 6. Interactive Entertainment Software Retail Sales Value (in Europe and USA 1992-1996, US$ 1,000)

Country	1992	1994	1996
BENELUX			
advanced consoles	2,538	14,229	45,579
PC/CD-ROM	213	15,454	172,368
FRANCE			
advanced consoles	2,968	16,785	243,435
PC/CD-ROM	318	22,361	209,918
GERMANY			
advanced consoles	747	12,562	156,206
PC/CD-ROM	2,624	156,528	1,005,290
ITALY			
advanced consoles	795	8,857	42,186
PC/CD-ROM	1,630	22,990	133,250
SPAIN			
advanced consoles	0	6,381	58,803
PC/CD-ROM	837	7,508	106,088
UK			
advanced consoles	4,086	22,784	184,480
PC/CD-ROM	1,675	35,274	305,410
REST OF EUROPE			
advanced consoles	0	3,467	97,741
PC/CD-ROM	1,108	31,924	377,021
TOTAL EUROPE			
advanced consoles[1]	11,134	85,065	828,429
PC/CD-ROM	8,404	292,038	2,309,344
USA			
advanced consoles[2]	22,400	72,375.0	1,204,600
PC/CD-ROM	36,045	595,335.0	1,802,880
[1] of which			
Sony Playstation	0	0.0	610,955
Sega Saturn	0	0.0	180,681
other advanced consoles	11,134	85,065	36,793
[2] of which			
Sony Playstation	0	0.0	717,750
Sega Saturn	0	0.0	268,400
Nintendo 64	0	0.0	210,000

Note: Interactive entertainment software is here taken to include CD-ROMs for multimedia personal computers and CDs for advanced consoles such as the Sony Playstation, Sega Saturn and Philips CD-i. The table is based on independent assessment, made by the Screen Digest and based on reviews of a variety of sources, both market research-oriented and that from manufacturers and software suppliers.
Values are here rounded into nearest US$ 1,000.

Source: The table is based on data from *Screen Digest*, February 1997.

Table 7. Radio Broadcast Stations and Radio Possessions

	Number of radio broadcast stations (1996)		Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
	AM	FM	
AFRICA			
Algeria	26	0	236
Angola	17	13	30
Benin	2	2	91
Botswana	7	13	125
Burkina Faso	2	1	28
Burundi	2	2	64
Cameroon	11	11	148
Cape Verde	1	6	176
Central African Rep.	1	1	73
Chad	6	1	246
Comoros	2	1	129
Congo	4	1	115
Côte d'Ivoire	71	0	143
Djibouti	2	2	81
Egypt	39	6	307
Equatorial Guinea	2	0	424
Eritrea	•	•	87
Ethiopia	4	0	197
Gabon	6	6	147
Gambia	3	2	163
Ghana	4	1	229
Guinea	6	6	43
Guinea-Bissau	2	3	40
Kenya	16	4	88
Lesotho	3	4	33
Liberia	3	4	228
Libya	17	3	226
Madagascar	17	3	192
Malawi	10	17	226
Mali	2	2	44
Mauritania	2	0	147
Mauritius	2	0	367
Morocco	20	7	219
Mozambique	29	4	37
Namibia	4	40	139
Niger	15	5	61
Nigeria	35	17	196
Rwanda	1	1	67
Sao Tomé & Principe	1	2	270
Sénegal	8	0	117
Seychelles	2	0	490
Sierra Leone	1	1	233
Somalia	•	•	41
South Africa	14	286	314
Sudan	11	0	258
Swaziland	7	6	163
Tanzania	12	4	26
Togo	2	0	212
Tunisia	7	8	199
Uganda	10	10	107

… Radio Broadcast Stations and Radio Possessions

	Number of radio broadcast stations (1996) AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
Zaire	10	4	98
Zambia	11	5	83
Zimbabwe	8	18	86

* Data not available.

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96.*

ASIA			
Afghanistan	5	0	*
Armenia	10	3	*
Azerbaijan	*	*	*
Bahrain	2	3	556
Bangladesh	9	6	47
Bhutan	1	1	17
Brunei Darussalam	4	4	271
Cambodia	1	0	108
China	274	*	184
Cyprus	11, 2[1]	8,6[1]	300
Georgia	*	*	550
Hong Kong	6	6	677
India	96	4	81
Indonesia	618	38	148
Iran	77	3	237
Iraq	16	1	218
Israel	9	45	478
Japan	318	58	912
Jordan	5	7	243
Kazakstan	*	*	376
Korea, Dem.	18	0	126
Korea, Rep.	79	46	1,017
Kuwait	3	0	445
Kyrgyzstan	*	*	*
Lao Rep.	10	0	127
Lebanon	5	3	889
Malaysia	28	3	432
Maldives	2	1	118
Mongolia	12	1	136
Myanmar	2	1	82
Nepal	88	0	35
Oman	2	4	583
Pakistan	26	8	88
Philippines	261	55	144
Qatar	2	3	428
Saudi Arabia	43	13	294
Singapore	13	4	645
Sri Lanka	12	5	201
Syria	9	1	257
Tajikistan	*	*	*
Thailand	200	100	190
Turkey	15	94	162

... Radio Broadcast Stations and Radio Possessions

	Number of radio broadcast stations (1996) AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
Turkmenistan	*	*	*
United Arab Emirates	8	3	312
Uzbekistan	*	*	81
Viet Nam	*	228	104
Yemen	4	1	32

* Data not available.

[1] Greek area, Turkish area.

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96.*

OCEANIA

	AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh.
Australia	258	67	1,291
Cook Islands	1	1	700
Fiji	7	1	607
New Zealand	64	2	991
Papua New Guinea	31	2	76
Solomon Islands	4	0	122
Vanuatu	2	0	462

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96.*

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

	AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh.
Antigua and Barbuda	4	2	427
Argentina	171	0	673
Aruba	4	4	581
Bahamas	3	2	735
Barbados	3	2	877
Belize	6	5	581
Bermuda	5	3	1,270
Bolivia	129	0	670
Br. Virgin Islands	1	0	474
Brazil	1,223	0	393
Cayman Islands	2	1	967
Chile	159	0	345
Colombia	413	217	178
Costa Rica	71	0	260
Cuba	150	5	347
Dominica	3	2	600
Dominican Republic	120	0	173
Ecuador	272	0	327
El Salvador	77	0	443
French Guiana	5	7	645
Grenada	1	0	595
Guadelope	2	8	228
Guatemala	91	0	68

... Radio Broadcast Stations and Radio Possessions

	Number of radio broadcast stations (1996)		Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
	AM	FM	
Guyana	4	3	491
Haiti	33	0	50
Honduras	176	0	408
Jamaica	10	17	436
Martinique	1	6	203
Mexico	679	0	256
Montserrat	8	4	582
Netherlands Antilles	9	4	1,069
Nicaragua	45	0	262
Panama	91	0	227
Paraguay	40	0	172
Peru	273	0	255
Puerto Rico	50	63	713
St Kitts & Nevis	2	0	666
St Lucia	4	1	764
St Vincent	2	0	667
Suriname	5	14	680
Trinidad & Tobago	2	4	491
Turks/Caicos Islands	3	0	514
U.S. Virgin Island	4	8	1005
Uruguay	99	0	606
Venezuela	181	0	443

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

NORTH AMERICA

	AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
Canada	900	29	1,051
United States	4,987	4,932	2,122

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96*.

EUROPE

	AM	FM	Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
Albania	17	1	190
Austria	6	21	619
Belarus	35	18	285
Belgium	3	19	774
Bosnia&Herzegovina	9	2	227
Bulgaria	20	15	454
Croatia	14	8	261
Czech Republic	•	•	631
Denmark	3	2	1,036
Estonia	•	•	467
Finland	6	105	1,003
France	41	800	891
Germany	80, 23[1]	470,17[1]	935
Greece	29	17	418

... Radio Broadcast Stations and Radio Possessions

	Number of radio broadcast stations (1996)		Radios per 1,000 inh. (1994)
	AM	FM	
Hungary	32	15	625
Iceland	5	147	793
Ireland	9	45	636
Italy	135	28	802
Latvia	*	*	662
Lithuania	13	26	387
Luxembourg	2	3	636
Macedonia TFYR	6	2	182
Malta	8	4	530
Moldovia, Rep of.	9	5	679
Monaco	3	4	1,016
Netherlands	3	12	909
Norway	46	493	799
Poland	27	27	441
Portugal	57	66	233
Romania	12	5	204
Russian Federation	*[2]	*[2]	339
Serbia & Montenegro	26	9	*
Slovakia	*	*	568
Slovenia	6	5	378
Spain	190	406	312
Sweden	5	360	879
Switzerland	7	265	841
Ukraine	*	*	812
United Kingdom	225	525	1,429
Yugoslavia, Fed. Rep of.	*	*	182

* Data not available.

[1] Western Germany, Eastern Germany.

[2] There are about 1,050, inclusive AM, FM and shortwave, radio broadcast stations in the Russian Federation.

Sources: The table is based on data from *The World Factbook 1996* (Internet) and *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook '96.*

Table 8. Book Titles Published

Country and year	Total	Per 100,000 inh. (1992-94)	Children's books		School textbooks	
			titles	copies ('000)	titles	copies ('000)
AFRICA						
Algeria 1994	323	1	17	•	15	•
Benin 1994	84	2	•	•	6'	9'
Egypt 1993	3,108	5	23	583	809	49,261
Eritrea 1993	106	3	0	0	64	323
Ethiopia 1990	385	•	•	•	•	•
Gambia 1994	21	2	•	•	2	6
Ghana 1992	28	(.)	•	•	•	•
Kenya 1990	348	•	•	•	•	•
Madagascar 1994	114	1	1'	3'	17'	60'
Malawi 1994	243	3	4'	•	20	•
Mauritius 1994	84	8	0	0	15	17
Morocco 1994	354	1	9	19	23	96
Namibia 1990	106	•	•	•	•	•
Nigeria 1992	1,562	1	•	•	407	•
South Africa 1994	4,574	11	526	4,113	272	16,297
Tanzania 1990	172	•	•	•	•	•
Tunisia 1993	539	6	129	•	61'	•
Uganda 1993	314	2	99	740	•	•
Zaire 1992	64	(.)	1'	8'	14'	112'
Zimbabwe 1992	232	2	5'	•	8'	•
ASIA						
Afghanistan 1990	2,795	•	•	•	•	•
Armenia 1994	224	6	91	681	211	9,021
Azerbaijan 1994	375	5	20	319	42	2,957
China 1994	100,951	8	3,064	131,730	•	•
Cyprus 1994	1,040	142	20	18	99	414
Georgia 1994	314	6	4	15	21	51
India 1994	11,460	1	400	•	191	•
Indonesia 1992	6,303	3	1,084'	•	715'	•
Iran 1994	10,753	16	1,201	•	•	•
Israel 1992	4,608	86	•	•	1,092	3,731
Japan 1992	35,496	28	2,889'	18,780'	2,512'	12,190'
Jordan 1993	500	10	28	•		
Kazakstan 1994	1,148	7	104	7,002	•	•
Korea, Rep. 1994	34,204	77	5,348	22,582	4,470	79,352
Kuwait 1992	196	11	•	•	•	•
Kyrgyzstan 1994	328	7	4'	41'	13	530
Lao Rep. 1992	64	1	13'	34'	0	0
Malaysia 1994	4,050	21	1,844'	7,048'	1,023	7,799
Mongolia 1992	285	12	25'	100'	•	•
Myanmar 1993	3,660	8	•	•	•	•
Oman 1992	24	1	•	•	•	•
Pakistan 1994	124	(.)	7'	25'	10'	252'
Philippines 1994	1,233	2	15'	•	207	•
Qatar 1994	371	69	1	•	228	•
Sri Lanka 1994	2,929	17	85	174	14	8,975
Syria 1992	598	4	34	•	•	•
Tajikistan 1994	231	4	11'	97'	21	1,210
Thailand 1992	7,626	13	439	•	640	•
Turkey 1994	4,473	8	269	•	355	•

... Book Titles Published

Country and year	Total	Per 100,000 inh. (1992-94)	Children's books titles	Children's books copies ('000)	School textbooks titles	School textbooks copies ('000)
Turkmenistan 1992	565	14	47[1]	1,807[1]	28	1,763
United Arab Emirates 1993	293	14	*	*	293	5,117
Uzbekistan 1993	1,340	6	42	806	194	20,069
Viet Nam 1993	5.581	8	683	8.596	1 370	66,049
OCEANIA						
Australia 1994	10,835	61	*	*	*	*
Brunei Darussalam 1992	45	16	*	*	*	*
Fiji 1994	401	52	0	0	223	1 251
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN						
Argentina 1994	9.065	26	807[1]	4,847[2]	736[2]	4,720[2]
Belize 1993	70	34	6[1]	*	20[1]	*
Brazil 1994	21.574	14	10,354	44,998	5,454	82,222
Chile 1992	1,820	13	148	*	169	*
Costa Rica 1994	963	29	*	*	*	*
Cuba 1994	932	9	69	2,879	150	625
Ecuador 1994	11	(.)	9[1]	36[1]	*	*
Guyana 1994	33	4	1[1]	40[1]	32[1]	468[1]
Honduras 1993	22	(.)	3	9	*	*
Paraguay 1993	152	3	3	*	25	*
Peru 1994	1,993	9	29	*	39[2]	*
Trinidad & Tobago 1993	26	2	25[1]	20[1]	1[1]	10[1]
Venezuela 1994	3.660	17	*	*	*	*
NORTH AMERICA						
Canada 1993	22.208	76	971	*	1,240	625
United States 1994	51,863	20	5.321	*	*	*
EUROPE						
Austria 1994	7,987	100	463	*	*	*
Belarus 1994	3.346	32	232	10,753	172	14,961
Bulgaria 1994	5.925	69	429	6,029	1,124	11,281
Croatia 1994	2.671	59	*	*	274	*
Czech Republic 1994	9.309	91	234	*	411	*
Denmark 1994	11.973	230	1.147	*	844	*
Estonia 1994	2.291	152	126	827	226	2,155
Finland 1994	12.539	247	793	*	494	*
France 1994	45,311	78	2.768	*	891	*
Germany 1994	70.643	87	4.777	*	3,551	*
Greece 1990	3,255	*	*	*	*	*
Hungary 1994	10.108	100	699	8,890	1,650	18,896
Iceland 1994	1,429	537	111	*	276	*
Italy 1994	32.673	57	1.745	18,360	2,165	46,439
Latvia 1994	1,677	65	188	1,990	202	2,314
Lithuania 1994	2.885	77	175	2,422	178	4,350
Luxembourg 1994	681	169	6	*	11[1]	*
Macedonia 1994	672	31	32	72	402	2,519

... Number of Book Titles Published

Country and year	Total	Per 100,000 inh. (1992-94)	Children's books titles	Children's books copies ('000)	School textbooks titles	School textbooks copies ('000)
Malta 1993	417	115	12[2]	*	23	*
Moldovia, Rep of. 1994	797	18	49	1,613	43	866
Netherlands 1993	34,067	222	9,615	*	11,002	*
Norway 1994	6,846	159	440	*	*	*
Poland 1994	10,874	28	492	5,979	574	27,701
Portugal 1994	6,667	68	1,025	3,969	1,381	10,348
Romania 1994	4,074	18	*	*	362	14,895
Russian Fed. 1994	30,390	20	1,742	80,713	1,031	108,373
Slovakia 1994	3,481	65	839	10	208	2,268
Slovenia 1994	2,906	151	360	*	481	22,551
Spain 1994	44,261	112	3,726	19,046	2,346	*
Sweden 1994	13,822	158	1,185	*	563	*
Switzerland 1994	15,378	217	641	*	381	*
Ukraine 1993	5,002	10	575	17,373	167	18,903
United Kingdom 1994	95,015	164	7,495	*	3,156	*
Yugoslavia, F.R. of 1994	2,799	*	71	260	609	7,937

* Data not available.
(.) Less than half the unit shown.

[1] First edition.
[2] 1992.

Sources: The table is based on data from *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1996* and *Human Development Report 1997.*

Table 9. International Entertainment Companies (Top 50) (ranked by 1996-97 revenue)

Rank	Company	Headquarters	Revenue (billions of US$)
1	Time Warner	New York	20,925
2	Walt Disney	Burbank	18,730
3	Bertelsmann	Guetersloh, Germany	12,300
4	Viacom.	New York	12,080
5	News Corp.	Sydney/New York/ Los Angeles	11,216
6	Sony Entertainment (div. of Sony Corp.)	Tokyo/Los Angeles	8,400
7	Havas	Paris	8,200
8	Tele-Communications Inc.	Englewood, Colo.	8,022
9	Universal Studios	Los Angeles	6,514
10	Granada Group	London	6,450
11	EMI Group	London	5,729
12	Polygram	Netherlands/London	5,453
13	NBC (div. of General Electric)	New York	5,200
14	US West	Denver	4,660
15	Cox Enterprises	Atlanta	4,600
16	Gannett	Arlington, Va.	4,400
17	CBS (div. of Westinghouse)	New York	4,145
18	Comcast	Philadelphia	4,030
19	Kirch Group	Ismaning, German	4,000[1]
20	Pearson	London	3,694
21	Rank Group	London	3,515
22	United News & Media	London	3,240
23	CLT-Ufa	Luxembourg	3,000[1]
24	Organizacoes Globo (div. of Globo)	Rio de Janeiro	2,900
25	Carlton	London	2,840
26	Fuji TV	Tokyo	2,690
27	Tribune Co.	Chicago	2,400
28	Nippon TV	Tokyo	2,300
29	Tokyo Broadcasting System	Tokyo	2,196
30	Canal Plus	Paris	1,970
31	Rogers Communications	Toronto	1,800
32	Mediaset	Milan	1,750
33	British Sky Broadcasting	London	1,704
34	Asahi	Tokyo	1,670
35	TF1	Paris	1,640
36	Toho	Tokyo	1,540
37	Kinnevik	Stockholm	1,500
38	Grupo Clarin	Buenos Aires	1,400
39	Cablevision Systems Corp.	Woodbury, N.Y.	1,300
40	Compagnie Generale des Eaux	Paris	1,200
41	Grupo Televisa	Mexico City	1,151
42	Egmont Group	Denmark	1,000
43	Publishing & Broadcasting Ltd.	Sydney	0,987
44	Pro 7 TV	Unterfoehring, Germany	0,966
45	AMC Entertainment	Kansas City, Mo.	0,750
46	United Artists Theatre Circuit	Englewood, Colo.	0,678
47	King World	New York	0,633
48	Le Groupe Videotron	Montreal	0,618
49	Grupo Cisneros	Caracas, Venezuela	0,518
50	Cineplex Odeon	Toronto	0,510

[1] Estimated.

Source: Variety, August 25-31 1997.

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Children in the World

Statistics

Statistics

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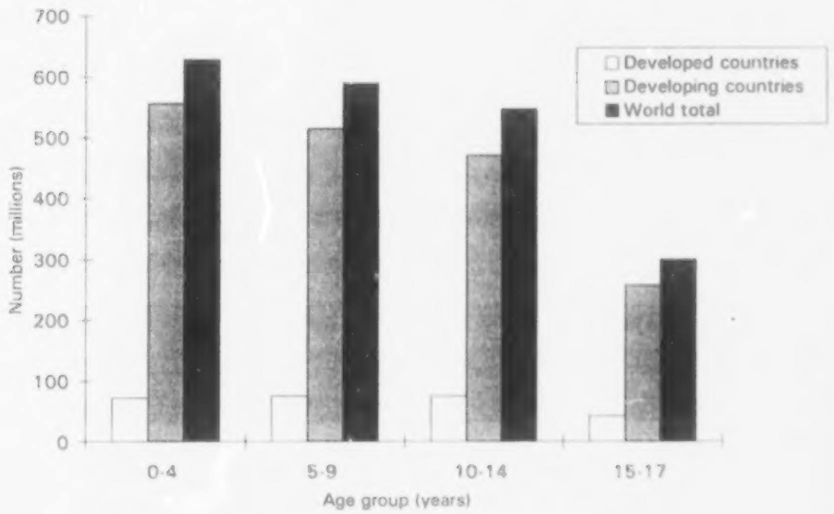
Figure 1. Number of Children in Different Regions (1995)



Source: The State of the World's Children 1997, UNICEF.

Table 1. Children in Different Regions – Percentage of total population (1995)

	World total (%)	More developed regions[1] (%)	Less developed regions[2] (%)
Children 0 - 4 years	11.1	6.2	12.4
Children 5 - 14 years	20.4	13.5	22.2
Children 15 - 24 years	18.0	14.1	19.0
Total population (thousands)	5,716,426	1,166,598	4,549,828
Median age of total population (years)	25.3	35.7	23.1

[1] More developed regions comprise Northern America, Japan, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

[2] Less developed regions comprise all regions of Africa, Latin America, Asia (excluding Japan) and Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

Note: Medium-variant projections.

Source: World Population Prospects: The 1994 revision, United Nations, New York, 1995.

Table 2. Demographic Indicators (1995)

	Total population (millions) 1995	Population urbanized¹ (%) 1995	Population under 18 (millions) 1995	Population under 18 (%) 1995
AFRICA				
Algeria	27.9	56	12.8	46
Angola	11.1	32	5.9	53
Benin	5.4	31	2.9	54
Botswana	1.5	28	0.7	47
Burkina Faso	10.3	27	5.3	51
Burundi	6.4	8	3.4	53
Cameroon	13.2	45	6.7	51
Cape Verde	0.4	•	0.2	48
Central African Republic	3.3	39	1.6	48
Chad	6.4	21	3.2	50
Comoros	0.7	•	0.3	53
Congo	2.6	59	1.3	50
Congo, Dem. Rep. (Zaire)	43.9	29	23.9	54
Côte d'Ivoire	14.3	44	7.9	55
Djibouti	0.6	•	0.3	47
Egypt	62.9	45	27.9	44
Equatorial Guinea	0.4	•	0.2	49
Eritrea	3.5	17	1.8	51
Ethiopia	55.1	13	29.0	53
Gabon	1.3	50	0.6	46
Gambia	1.1	26	0.5	45
Ghana	17.5	36	9.0	51
Guinea	6.7	30	3.6	54
Guinea-Bissau	1.1	22	0.5	45
Kenya	28.3	28	15.5	55
Lesotho	2.1	23	1.0	48
Liberia	3.0	45	1.6	53
Libya	5.4	86	2.8	52
Madagascar	14.8	27	7.8	53
Malawi	11.1	14	5.9	53
Mali	10.8	27	5.8	54
Mauritania	2.3	54	1.1	48
Mauritius	1.1	41	0.4	36
Morocco	27.0	48	11.6	43
Mozambique	16.0	34	8.2	51
Namibia	1.5	37	0.7	47
Niger	9.2	17	5.0	54
Nigeria	111.7	39	58.0	52
Rwanda	8.0	6	4.2	53
Sao Tomé & Principe	0.1	•	0.1	53
Senegal	8.3	42	4.3	52
Seychelles	0.1	•	0.0	53
Sierra Leone	4.5	36	2.3	51
Somalia	9.3	26	5.0	54
South Africa	41.5	51	18.1	44
Sudan	28.1	25	14.2	51
Swaziland	0.9	•	0.4	50
Tanzania	29.7	24	15.6	53
Togo	4.1	31	2.2	54
Tunisia	8.9	57	3.7	42

...Demographic Indicators

	Total population (millions) 1995	Population urbanized[1] (%) 1995	Population under 18 (millions) 1995	Population under 18 (%) 1995
Uganda	21.3	13	11.8	55
Zambia	9.5	43	5.1	54
Zimbabwe	11.3	32	5.7	50
ASIA				
Afghanistan	20.1	20	9.4	47
Armenia	3.6	69	1.3	36
Azerbaijan	7.6	56	2.8	37
Bahrain	0.6	*	0.2	37
Bangladesh	120.4	18	55.9	46
Bhutan	1.6	6	0.8	50
Brunei Darussalam	0.3	*	0.1	40
Cambodia	10.3	21	5.1	50
China	1221.5	30	379.3	31
Cyprus	0.7	*	0.2	30
Georgia	5.5	59	1.5	27
Hong Kong	5.9	95	1.4	24
India	935.7	27	384.9	41
Indonesia	197.6	35	77.9	39
Iran	67.3	59	33.9	50
Iraq	20.4	75	10.2	50
Israel	5.6	91	1.9	34
Japan	125.1	78	25.3	20
Jordan	5.4	72	2.7	50
Kazakstan	17.1	60	6.0	35
Korea, Dem.	23.9	61	8.1	34
Korea, Rep.	45.0	81	12.9	29
Kuwait	1.5	97	0.7	47
Kyrgyzstan	4.7	39	2.0	43
Lao Rep.	4.9	22	2.5	51
Lebanon	3.0	87	1.2	40
Malaysia	20.1	54	8.8	44
Maldives	0.3	*	0.1	53
Mongolia	2.4	61	1.1	46
Myanmar	46.5	26	20.2	43
Nepal	21.9	14	10.7	49
Oman	2.2	13	1.2	55
Pakistan	140.5	35	70.8	50
Philippines	67.6	54	30.2	45
Qatar	0.6	*	0.2	31
Saudi Arabia	17.9	80	8.7	49
Singapore	2.8	100	0.8	29
Sri Lanka	18.4	22	6.7	36
Syria	14.7	52	7.9	54
Tajikistan	6.1	32	3.0	49
Thailand	58.8	20	20.2	34
Turkey	61.9	69	24.5	40
Turkmenistan	4.1	45	1.9	46
United Arab Emirates	1.9	84	0.7	37
Uzbekistan	22.8	41	10.5	46
Viet Nam	74.5	21	32.7	44
Yemen	14.5	34	7.8	54

...Demographic Indicators

	Total population (millions) 1995	Population urbanized¹ (%) 1995	Population under 18 (millions) 1995	Population under 18 (%) 1995
OCEANIA				
Australia	18.1	85	4.6	25
Cook Islands	(.)	•	(.)	42
Fiji	0.8	•	0.3	42
Kiribati	0.1	•	(.)	46
Marshall Islands	0.1	•	(.)	48
Micronesia	0.1	•	0.1	47
New Zealand	3.6	86	1.0	28
Palau	(.)	47	(.)	47
Papua New Guinea	4.3	16	2.0	47
Samoa	0.2	•	0.1	46
Solomon Islands	0.4	•	0.2	51
Tonga	0.1	•	(.)	43
Tuvalu	(.)	•	(.)	40
Vanuatu	0.2	•	0.1	50
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN				
Antigua and Barbuda	0.1	•	(.)	36
Argentina	34.6	88	12.0	35
Bahamas	0.3	•	0.1	34
Barbados	0.3	•	0.1	28
Belize	0.2	•	0.1	49
Bolivia	7.4	61	3.5	47
Brazil	161.8	78	62.1	38
British Virgin Islands	(.)	•	(.)	42
Chile	14.3	84	4.9	34
Colombia	35.1	73	13.8	39
Costa Rica	3.4	50	1.4	41
Cuba	11.0	76	3.0	27
Dominica	0.1	•	(.)	35
Dominican Republic	7.8	65	3.2	41
Ecuador	11.5	58	4.9	43
El Salvador	5.8	45	2.8	48
Grenada	0.1	•	(.)	36
Guatemala	10.6	42	5.4	51
Guyana	0.8	•	0.3	38
Haiti	7.2	32	3.3	46
Honduras	5.7	44	2.9	51
Jamaica	2.4	54	0.9	38
Mexico	93.7	75	39.6	42
Montserrat	(.)	•	(.)	36
Nicaragua	4.4	63	2.4	55
Panama	2.6	53	1.0	38
Paraguay	5.0	53	2.3	46
Peru	23.8	72	9.9	42
St Kitts & Nevis	(.)	•	(.)	37
St Lucia	0.1	•	0.1	36
St Vincent & Grenadines	0.1	•	(.)	36
Suriname	0.4	•	0.2	40
Trinidad & Tobago	1.3	72	0.5	38

...Demographic Indicators

	Total population (millions) 1995	Population urbanized[1] (%) 1995	Population under 18 (millions) 1995	Population under 18 (%) 1995
Turks & Caicos Islands	(.)	*	(.)	36
Uruguay	3.2	90	0.9	28
Venezuela	21.8	93	9.3	43
NORTH AMERICA				
Canada	29.5	77	7.3	25
United States	263.3	76	68.6	26
EUROPE				
Albania	3.4	37	1.3	38
Austria	8.0	56	1.7	21
Belarus	10.1	71	2.6	26
Belgium	10.1	97	2.2	22
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3.5	49	0.9	26
Bulgaria	8.8	71	2.0	23
Croatia	4.5	64	1.0	22
Czech Republic	10.3	65	2.5	24
Denmark	5.2	85	1.1	21
Estonia	1.5	73	0.4	27
Finland	5.1	63	1.2	24
France	58.0	73	13.7	24
Germany	81.6	87	15.8	19
Greece	10.5	65	2.2	21
Hungary	10.1	65	2.3	23
Iceland	0.3	*	0.1	29
Ireland	3.6	58	1.1	31
Italy	57.2	67	10.8	19
Latvia	2.6	73	0.6	23
Lithuania	3.7	72	1.0	27
Luxembourg	0.4	*	0.1	21
Macedonia	2.2	60	0.6	27
Malta	0.4	*	0.1	27
Moldova	4.4	52	1.4	32
Netherlands	15.5	89	3.4	22
Norway	4.3	73	1.0	23
Poland	38.4	65	10.7	28
Portugal	9.8	36	2.3	23
Romania	22.8	55	5.8	25
Russian Federation	147.0	76	37.5	26
Slovakia	5.4	59	1.5	28
Slovenia	1.9	64	0.4	21
Spain	39.6	77	8.4	21
Sweden	8.8	83	2.0	23
Switzerland	7.2	61	1.5	21
Ukraine	51.4	70	12.5	25
United Kingdom	58.3	90	13.5	23
Yugoslavia	10.8	57	2.9	27

* Data not available.

(.) Less than 50,000.

[1] Urban population is the percentage of population living in urban areas as defined according to the national definition used in the most recent population census.

Source: The table is based on data from *The State of the World's Children 1997*, UNICEF.

Table 3. Education

	Total adult literacy rate[1] (%) 1995	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-95	Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) 1990-95	Secondary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-94 male	female
AFRICA					
Algeria	62	103	92	66	55
Angola	42[3]	88	34	•	•
Benin	37	66	55	17	7
Botswana	70	116	84	49	15
Burkina Faso	19	38	61	11	6
Burundi	35	69	74	8	5
Cameroon	63	87	66	32	23
Cape Verde	72	123[4]	•	•	•
Central African Republic	60	71[3]	65[3]	17[3]	6[3]
Chad	48	59	46	13	2
Comoros	57	75[4]	•	•	•
Congo	75	•	53	•	•
Congo, Dem. Rep. (Zaire)	77	68	64	33	15
Côte d'Ivoire	40	69	73	33	17
Djibouti	46	38	•	•	•
Egypt	51	97	[illegible]	81	69
Equatorial Guinea	79	149[3,4]	•	•	•
Eritrea	•	47	79	17	13
Ethiopia	36	23	58	12	11
Gabon	63	•	50[3]	•	•
Gambia	39	67	87	25	13
Ghana	65	76	80	44	28
Guinea	36	46	80	17	6
Guinea-Bissau	55	60[3]	20[3]	9[3]	4[3]
Kenya	78	91	77	28	23
Lesotho	71	98	60	22	31
Liberia	38	35[3]	•	31[3]	12[3]
Libya	76	110	•	95	95
Madagascar	80[3]	73	28	14	14
Malawi	56	80	37	6	3
Mali	31	31	85	12	6
Mauritania	38	69	72	19	11
Mauritius	83	106	100	58	60
Morocco	44	73	80	40	29
Mozambique	40	60	35	9	6
Namibia	•	136	82	49	61
Niger	14	29	82	9	4
Nigeria	57	93	92	32	27
Rwanda	61	77	60	11	9
Sao Tomé & Principe	57[3]	•	•	•	•
Senegal	33	58	88[3]	21	11
Seychelles	88[3]	88[3,4]	•	•	•
Sierra Leone	31	51	•	22	12
Somalia	24[3]	11[3]	•	9[3]	5[3]
South Africa	82	111	76	71	84
Sudan	46	52	94	24	19
Swaziland	77	120[4]	•	•	•
Tanzania	68	70	83	6	5
Togo	52	102	50	34	12
Tunisia	67	118	92	55	49

... Education

	Total adult literacy rate[1] (%) 1995	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-95	Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) 1990-95	Secondary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-94	
				male	female
Uganda	62	67	55	14	8
Zambia	78	92	•	25[3]	14[3]
Zimbabwe	85	119	76	51	40
ASIA					
Bahrain	85	111[4]	•	•	•
Afghanistan	32	31	43[3]	22	8
Armenia	99[3]	90	•	80	90
Azerbaijan	97[3]	89	•	89	88
Bangladesh	38	79	47[3]	25	13
Bhutan	42	25[3]	82	7[3]	2[3]
Brunei Darussalam	88	107[4]	•	•	•
Cambodia	35[3]	•	50	•	•
China	82	118	88	60	51
Cyprus	94[3]	101[3]	•	•	•
Georgia	99[3]	•	•	•	•
Hong Kong	92	102	•	69[3]	73[3]
India	52	102	62	59	38
Indonesia	84	114	92	48	39
Iran	69	105	90	74	58
Iraq	58	91	72[3]	53	34
Israel	92[3]	95	100	84	91
Japan	•	102	100	95	97
Jordan	87	94	98	52	54
Kazakstan	98[3]	86	•	89	91
Korea, Dem.	•	104[3]	•	•	•
Korea, Rep.	98	98	100	97	96
Kuwait	79	65	99	60	60
Kyrgyzstan	97[3]	•	•	•	•
Lao Rep.	57	107	53	31	19
Lebanon	92	115	•	73	78
Malaysia	84	93	98	56	61
Maldives	93	134[3]	•	•	•
Mongolia	83	97	•	85[3]	97[3]
Myanmar	83	105	•	23	23
Nepal	28	109	52	46	23
Oman	•	85	96	64	57
Pakistan	38	44	48	28	13
Philippines	95	111	67	64[3]	65[3]
Qatar	79	90[4]	•	•	•
Saudi Arabia	63	75	94	54	43
Singapore	91	107	100[3]	69[3]	71[3]
Sri Lanka	90	106	92	71	78
Syria	71	105	92	52	42
Tajikistan	98[3]	89	•	98	101
Thailand	94	98	88	38	37
Turkey	82	103	89	74	48
Turkmenistan	98[3]	•	•	•	•
United Arab Emirates	79	110	99	84	94
Uzbekistan	97[3]	80	•	96	92
Viet Nam	94	111	•	44[3]	41[3]
Yemen	39[3]	78	•	47	10

...Education

	Total adult literacy rate[1] (%) 1995	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-95	Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) 1990-95	Secondary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-94 male	female
OCEANIA					
Australia	*	108	99	83	86
Cook Islands	99[3]	98[4]	*	*	*
Fiji	92	128[4]	*	*	*
Kiribati	93[3]	91[4]	*	*	*
Marshall Islands	91[3]	95[4]	*	*	*
Micronesia	81[3]	100[4]	*	*	*
New Zealand	*	102	94	103	104
Palau	96[3]	103[4]	*	*	*
Papua New Guinea	72	74	71	15	10
Samoa	98[3]	100[4]	*	*	*
Solomon Islands	62[3]	94[4]	*	*	*
Tonga	99[3]	98[3,4]	*	*	*
Tuvalu	99[3]	101[4]	*	*	*
Vanuatu	64[3]	106[4]	*	*	*
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN					
Antigua and Barbuda	95[3]	100[3,4]	*	*	*
Argentina	96	107	*	70	75
Bahamas	98	97[4]	*	*	*
Barbados	97	90[4]	*	*	*
Belize	70[3]	109[4]	*	*	*
Bolivia	83	95	60	40	34
Brazil	83	111	70	31[3]	36[3]
British Virgin Islands	98[3]	*	*	*	*
Chile	95	98	95	65	70
Colombia	91	119	59	57	68
Costa Rica	95	105	88	45	49
Cuba	96	104	95	72	81
Dominica	94[3]	*	*	*	*
Dominican Rep	82	97	58	30	43
Ecuador	90	123	67[3]	54	56
El Salvador	72	79	58	27	30
Grenada	98[3]	88[3,4]	*	*	*
Guatemala	56	85	*	25	23
Guyana	98	112[3,4]	*	*	*
Haiti	45	56	47	22	21
Honduras	73	112	*	29	37
Jamaica	85	109	96	62	70
Mexico	90	112	84	57	58
Montserrat	97[3]	100[3,4]	*	*	*
Nicaragua	66	103	54	39	44
Panama	91	106	82	60	65
Paraguay	92	111	76	36	38
Peru	89	119	*	66	60[3]
St Kitts & Nevis	90[3]	*	*	*	*
St Lucia	82[3]	95[3,4]	*	*	*
St Vincent & Grenadines	82[3]	95[3,4]	*	*	*
Suriname	93	127[4]	*	*	*
Trinidad & Tobago	98	94	95	74	78

...Education

	Total adult literacy rate[1] (%) 1995	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-95	Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) 1990-95	Secondary school enrolment ratio (gross)[2] 1990-94	
				male	female
Turks & Caicos Islands	98[3]	*	*	*	*
Uruguay	97	109	94	61[3]	62[3]
Venezuela	91	96	78	29	41
NORTH AMERICA					
Canada	97[1]	105	97	104	103
United States	*	107	*	98	97
EUROPE					
Albania	*	96	92	84	72
Austria	*	103	97	109	104
Belarus	98[1]	96	99	89	96
Belgium	*	99	*	103	104
Bosnia & Herzegovina	*	*	*	*	*
Bulgaria	98[1]	86	93	66	70
Croatia	97[1]	87	98	80	86
Czech	*	99	98	85	88
Denmark	*	98	100	112	115
Estonia	100[1]	83	100	87	96
Finland	*	100	100	110	130
France	*	106	96	104	107
Germany	*	97	100	101	100
Greece	95[1]	98	100	100	98
Hungary	99[1]	95	98	79	82
Iceland	*	100[1]	*	*	*
Ireland	*	103	100	101	110
Italy	97[1]	98	100	81	82
Latvia	99[1]	83	*	84	90
Lithuania	98[1]	92	94	76	79
Luxembourg	*	91[4]	*	*	*
Macedonia	*	87	95	53	55
Malta	86[1]	108[4]	*	*	*
Moldova	96[1]	77	*	67	72
Netherlands	*	97	*	126	120
Norway	*	99	100	118	114
Poland	99[1]	98	100	82	87
Portugal	85[1]	120	*	63	74
Romania	97[3]	86	93	83	82
Russian Federation	98[1]	109	*	84	91
Slovakia	*	101	97	87	90
Slovenia	*	97	100	88	90
Spain	95[1]	104	96	107	120
Sweden	*	100	98	99	100
Switzerland	*	101	100	93	89
Ukraine	98[1]	87	*	65	95
United Kingdom	*	112	*	91	94
Yugoslavia	93[1]	72	*	64	65

* Data not available.

[1] Adult literacy rate is the percentage of persons aged 15 and over who can read and write.

[2] The gross enrolment ratio is the total number of children enrolled in a schooling level - whether or not they belong in the relevant age group for that level - expressed as a percentage of the total number of children in the relevant age group for that level.

[3] Indicates data that refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading, differ from the standard definition, or refer to only part of a country.

[4] Percentage of age group enrolled in primary school (gross) 1990-93.

Source: The table is based on data from *The State of the World's Children 1997*, UNICEF.

Table 4. Working Children (1995)

According to new estimates, there are some 250 million children 5-14 years old who are toiling in economic activity in developing countries. For close to one-half of them (or 120 million), this work is carried out on a full time basis, while for the remaining one-half it is combined with schooling or other non-economic activities. Among school going children, up to one-third of the boys (33%) and more than two-fifths (42%) of the girls are also engaged in economic activities on a part-time basis.

The overall estimates of 250 million working children are exclusive of children who are engaged in regular non-economic activities, including those who provide services of domestic nature on a full-time basis in their own parent's or guardian's housholds.

Distribution of Economically Active Children 5-14 Years of Age in Developing Countries, by Region and Sex (1995)

Region	Both sexes	Boys	Girls
World (estimates in millions)	250	140	110
Regions (in per cent)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Africa	32.0	56.0	44.0
Asia (excluding Japan)	61.0	54.0	46.0
Latin America & Carribean	7.0	67.0	33.0
Oceania (excluding Australia & New Zealand)	0.2	57.0	43.0
Sex ratio (World)	100.0	56.0	44.0

Note: The estimates are based on the findings of recent experiments in four countries as well as the results of national surveys conducted using the newly developed sample survey methods and relevant demographic factors.

Source: Ashagrie, 1997, ILO.

...Working Children

Economic Activity Participation Rate of Children 5-14 Years of Age, by Region and Sex (1995)

Region	Both sexes (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
World	24.7	27.0	22.3
Regions			
Africa	41.4	44.8	36.7
Asia (excluding Japan)	21.1	22.0	20.0
Latin America & Carribean	16.5	46.0	11.0
Oceania (excluding Australia & New Zealand)	10.4	21.8	9.2

Source: Ashagrie, 1997, ILO.

References

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Children's Participation in the Media

Some Examples

There are many ways to improve the image of children in media contents and to facilitate children's right to express themselves through the media. One way is to offer children the chance to participate in the media – in the programmes, films, texts, on the Internet, etc. – and to give them the opportunity to be active in the media production process. This section contains a few practical examples – by no means exhaustive – of how this can be done. The Clearinghouse is interested in collecting and publishing comments and articles on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in the media world-wide. We hope that the following examples will inspire persons and organisations engaged in other projects related to children's media participation to contact us about them. We also hope that the examples will encourage new initiatives.

◆

UNICEF Media Activities for Children

In recent years, UNICEF has developed ways of approaching children directly to solicit their opinions and engage them in discussion on development issues. A number of initiatives, outlined below, have involved the participation of children from industrialized and developing countries in meaningful dialogue and activities that enhance their awareness of global issues and increase their capacity to take action in appropriate ways. These initiatives strongly encourage child participation and challenge children to take an active part in exploring and discussing issues that affect their future.

World Wide Web

In 1995, the *Voices of Youth* (VOY) site on the World Wide Web was launched at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen, where it was an immediate success. It introduces children to child rights issues, and encourages them to express their views. Children from all over the world responded to the invitation to come forward with questions for government delegates attending the Summit.

After the Summit, we decided to continue VOY as a worldwide forum for children to express their views and dialogue on issues of development, peace and justice, and in particular those issues affecting their own lives. VOY is a good example of how today's technology can be used to bring young people together in a meaningful dialogue about issues that concern them. Indeed, the VOY website has just been chosen as one of "Seven Super Sites of the Month" by *Kids' Space*, a children's web magazine with readers in 124 countries, which chooses web sites that inspire children to learn and discover the world. For further information, contact Voices of Youth online at **voy@unicef.org** or Web site, **http://www.unicef.org/voy**

CD-ROM

My City is an interactive animated CD-ROM game jointly funded by UNICEF and the Canadian government. The players, who become mayors of their city for a day, encounter a series of social and cultural issues based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As mayors, they must decide how to respond to each of these issues. They are given a budget at the start of their tenure, and a popularity meter indicates the success or otherwise of their policies with the voting public. The aim is for the mayor to stay in office without losing resources and popularity as she/he responds to the issues presented. The game encourages awareness and discussion of problems encountered by youth around the world, and encourages them to act on similar problems in their own communities.

Broadcasting

Participation in the *International Children's Day of Broadcasting* has grown from around 50 broadcasters in 1992 to over 2,000 in 1996. More remarkable than the numbers however, is the extent to which broadcasters throughout the world have become involved in the Day, and have taken its message to heart. An increasing number of broadcasters are devoting an entire day or week to children. Many participating broadcasters have trained children to produce their own programmes, and make documentaries on violations of children's rights.

Another interesting aspect of the Day is the selection of a theme of special concern each year. Through the theme in 1996 of violence in the media, we were able to draw attention to the International Children's Television Charter, which rejects "gratuitous scenes of violence and sex", and is specifically aligned with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1994 saw the creation of a special International Emmy award to honour the broadcaster whose participation in the Day is judged the most outstanding.

In 1997 the *International Children's Day of Broadcasting* was celebrated on Sunday, December 14. For further information, contact the ICDB website at **http://www. unicef. org/icdb**

Multi-media

In November 1997, UNICEF launched the *Meena Communication Initiative*, a new regional effort whose goal is to change the lives of girls in South Asia, a region where discrimination is rife. The protagonist is Meena, a ten- year-old girl who must overcome a series of obstacles in her quest to exercise her rights. As she does so, the series explores the implications of girls' development for the community as a whole.

The project takes the form of a multimedia package comprising a 12-episode animated film series, a 15-part radio series on the BBC's Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and Nepali World Services, documentaries, comic books, posters, folk media and various other materials. Meena will not only be carried on TV and radio, but the concept will also be integrated into school curricula throughout South Asia, and special kits will be made available to non-profit organizations working on behalf of girls in the region.

In Africa, UNICEF has launched *Sara*, a similar multi-media communication package aimed at providing a role-model for adolescent girls in East and Southern Africa.

The package includes an animated television series, a radio series, comic books, story books, audio cassettes and posters. Sara, the heroine, embarks on a series of adventures and faces important decisions, such as whether or not to stay in school, how to deal with difficult adults, and how to protect herself from the HIV/AIDS virus. The episodes teach girls essential life skills such as effective communication, negotiation and problem-solving. The series will be carried in at least 15 countries in the region.

Children's news

In 1996, UNICEF also teamed up with the Children's Express, a news service run by children for audiences of all ages, to visit Bangladesh where they filed stories on child labour issues.

The Children's Express members conducted a training workshop with three Bangladeshi children, who subsequently worked as reporters during the project. Together, the group interviewed child rights activists, child labour experts and other children in Dhaka.

The Bangladeshi children returned to New York with the rest of the group to work together on additional stories concerning child labour issues in America, and made media appearances to coincide with the International Children's Day of Broadcasting. The trip was a sequel to the Children's Express/UNICEF visit to Bosnia and Croatia in 1995, which focused on the issue of children affected by armed conflict.

Reporting on children's issues

At the World Congress against commercial sexual exploitation of children in 1996, one area of concern that was identified is how the media report cases of child abuse and children's issues generally. UNICEF is working with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to encourage the media to develop international guidelines and codes of conduct for reporting on children's issues. In a series of consultations with media from all over the world, UNICEF will collaborate with the IFJ and the Committee on the Rights of the Child to prepare and adopt final draft guidelines for media reporting on children's issues.

These are just a few of UNICEF's planned media and multi-media activities for children.

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Children's Express, UK/USA

Imagine a youth club whose focus is journalism rather than football. A place where inner-city kids are given the chance to tackle issues like: why teachers can turn a blind eye to drugs, why suicide is the second biggest cause of young deaths or why Ecstasy is something to die for.

Children's Express began life in the back room of a brownstone house in New York City in 1975. It was the home of Bob Clampitt, a former Wall Street lawyer and business entrepreneur, and a man who passionately believed that what children thought and said *did* matter. It was his dream to create a vehicle for children to report the news. As a first step he set up a magazine called *Children's Express*. But what began as a publication 'by children for children' in the living room of his house in Greenwich Village, very soon evolved into a news service that provided newspaper columns, articles, radio and television programmes across the United States.

Since then CE has gone on to be nominated for a Pulitzer Price, has won Emmy and Peabody Awards for its television coverage, published five books and held bi-annual symposia on young people and the media – in the course of which the organisation has developed an enviable reputation as an objective source of youth views. There are now five bureaux in the States: Washington (the Foundation headquarters), New York, Indianapolis, Marquette and Oakland.

By children for everyone

Having heard about Children's Express, a group of journalists and TV producers ran a two-week pilot scheme in London in August 1994. Notices were put up in schools around the city, and 30 children were selected from 100 applicants. The main criterion was enthusiasm. Four teen editors from the New York bureau trained the London children and the final product was a double page spread in *The Guardian* in October 1994. Stephanie Williams, a journalist of 20 years, who helped run the pilot, was overwhelmed by how the young people worked and was struck by the fact that they were providing what was lacking in the media: the youth angle – 'by children for everyone'. She decided that these kids could not be let down and started raising money to set up a London bureau. Children's Express UK celebrated its second anniversary in May this year.

Operating as a news agency

Children's Express reporters and editors research and report stories on subjects of their choice. They also accept commissions from newspapers and magazines. The organisation operates like a news agency by placing their stories in local, national and regional newspapers and magazines. CE's aim is to give young people the power and means to express themselves publicly on vital issues that affect them, and in the process to raise their self-esteem and develop their potential.

Children's Express targets children aged 8 to 18 from inner city areas, working with them after school, on Saturdays and during the holidays. The programme operates in two tiers. Younger children, aged 8 to 13, are the reporters, and are trained by the older children, aged 14 to 18, who also take responsibility for editing and overseeing the editorial activities. The ideal story team is five: three reporters and two editors. Every aspect of the story from interview, roundtable discussion to the debriefing afterwards, is tape-recorded. Not only does this mean that the programme is open to all, regardless of academic ability, but it guarantees accuracy and encourages literacy, organisation and writing well. In particular, it reinforces numerous aspects of the National Curriculum. It also increases children's self-confidence, develops curiosity and teaches them responsibility and citizenship.

From idea to publishing

The young people at Children's Express take an extraordinary degree of ownership into the process, from the initial story idea right through to seeing their names on the published article. But it is the process which is of the utmost importance. Publication is not a certainty; it is the cherry on the cake. The children run the reporters' board and the editors' board, determine which stories to follow, initiate research and interviews and work together in teams to realise their aims. They organise and run monthly meetings, quarterly training sessions in-house, and trainings for pilot schemes (two so far: one in Kent in February 1996 which did not develop into a bureau, and one in Newcastle in February 1997 which did), presentations and workshops. They are directly involved in the management of the programme: groups of kids sit on panels to interview shortlisted adult staff; they contribute to the on-going monitoring and evaluation of the programme; a team of young people have been instrumental in selecting the winners of a design competition which CE is running with students at the London College of Printing; their management proposals are put before the trustees on a regular basis.

Through CE, kids meet adults that they would normally never meet, discover things are not always what they seem and find out that if they do not take responsibility no-one else will. They learn to see issues from someone else's point of view and to be persistent and assiduous. They also learn that many people are worse off than they are. The London bureau's first big scoop was published in May 1995 in *The Independent* – an investigation on how easy it is for under-age children to buy Lottery tickets. CE covered the 1995 Labour Party Conference for Channel Four's *'First Edition'* and investigated over-crowded classrooms for their *'Hands Up'* programme. Since then, apart from producing a regular monthly piece for the *Times Educational Supplement*, they have covered the European Youth Parliament in Brussels for *The Observer* in May 1996, the BAFTA Children's Television Awards and the Childline Conference, produced a special edition of *the Architects' Journal* in October 1996 and made presentations at conferences run by Demos, BT Forum and Save the Children. CE members have also recently produced their first pre-recorded packages for radio which were commissioned by BBC Radio 5 Live, and 'fact-voice' presentations have been prepared for Liberty Radio and Radio 4.

Increasing demand

In the last two years, over 195 young people have been trained by CE teen editors and further recruitment is planned to roll out over the coming months. To date, Children's Express has worked on over 175 stories and published over 100 articles in the national press. They have reached over 50 million people through newspapers, on radio and television, and demand for their pieces is steadily increasing. Also during this period, CE has participated in seven television and six radio broadcasts, and has spoken at three conferences and covered seven others. In February 1997, Children's Express opened its first regional bureau, in partnership with the Save the Children Fund, on the Cowgate Estate in Newcastle. Here the focus is on a specific community where the children have virtually nothing on offer: no sports or leisure provision, no shops, no entertainment, no youth clubs, a school which is under threat of closing, and children with major literacy problems who are frequently excluded from school and who live in very difficult family situations. The pressure from the community and media is huge. Children are literally breaking into the building to be included in the programme.

Our aim is to open a further two bureaux in the UK by the year 2000 and then a further five. In this way it is our intention to improve the future prospects of thousands of children as well as to become Britain's first national news service producing news by young people.

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Participatory Techniques in Nepal[1]

This project combines participatory techniques for evaluation as well as for learning to use mass media. The sites are the Nagubahal and Guchibahal areas of the municipality of Lalitpur, Nepal. It combines the use of video, magazine and street drama. Under the Nepal/UK Partnership Scheme of The British Embassy in Nepal, funding for this project was provided to the DECORE Consultancy group to initiate the work and evaluate the results of the project, using participatory communication.

The idea behind the project is based on Thurnberg's Spiral of Interaction model (Windahl et al. 1992 p. 79) which says that when the communication function is fulfilled in a community, other functions are set in motion – a spiral of increased identity, community, knowledge and action, enabling the group/community to reach its goals. This project shows how a participatory communication approach can help realise development goals.

DECORE worked with young people from different urban communities in Nepal. They let the young people express in their own terms the need of their communities and after attending communication classes arranged by DECORE these young participants were enabled to address local issues and problems through communication production. In one case, participants chose to address the issue of drug addiction and related social problems and express their ideas through the medium of video. Other participants chose to address the issue of conflicts in family relations through the medium of street drama.

DECORE has also carried out a participatory evaluation of the project to determine the extent to which the project as a whole has achieved its general objectives of attempting to test an existing theory, that is, whether participatory actions spirally lead to other community activities – by discerning the attitudes and perceptions about the project and its activities among the participants themselves, their parents/relatives, community members, the persons and agencies involved in the project, or those who have a stake in it. Generally speaking the feed back has been positive.

Communication starts interactions

One main result of the project is that communication (interpersonal or mediatised) starts a 'spiral' of other interactions that can be oriented to forming a group attitude, or catalysing group action, or even merely ensuring the delivery of complete and relevant information. The project also makes heavy use of participatory communication techniques.

As a basic methodology of participatory communication, both the project and its evaluation techniques are replicable in other societies. Project managers and personnel will have to be extra sensitive to appreciate what can be adopted and what must be 'created' in the new contexts.

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Note

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Windahl, Sven, and Signitzer, Benno H., with Olson, Jean T. (1992) *Using Communication Theory. An Introduction to Planned Communication.* London, Sage Publications.

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Implementation of the UN CRC and the Role of Radio

In Salt River, South Africa, the Children's Resource Centre has set up a children's radio production group that regularly makes recordings for transmission on local, community radio stations. In Senegal, Radio Gune-Yi is a radio show produced by young people broadcast weekly on the national radio airwaves. A similar children's radio show is produced and transmitted nationally in Guatemala. In North America the White Mountain Apache Tribe broadcasts its own youth magazine and in Australia another indigenous radio station also involves young people in production. What they all share is an interest in issues such as the environment, peace and basic human rights. What they all have in common is a recognition of the way radio can action at least two of those rights – the freedom to hold and express an opinion and the right to access to the media.

Of all media – print, television and the Internet – radio excels in actioning and delivering those rights codified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. With an outreach that currently exceeds television by a ratio of ten to one in developing countries (500 million radio receivers to 50 million TV sets), low-cost operational requirements, an oral mode not dependent on literacy that can reflect indigenous culture, and also with an easily-mastered, simple technology, radio plays a key role in delivery of news and information, health messages, education provision and in the representation of diverse multi-cultural social groups. Radio drama (in the soap-opera edutainment format) now plays a crucial part in awareness-raising and conflict resolution in Afghanistan and Bosnia Herzegovina.

Communicators of tomorrow

In an increasing number of countries radio is now offering children and young people the opportunity of access and the chance to participate. For them, radio production training gives experience in teamwork and communication as well as a sense of community and citizenship. It is an effective vehicle for learning what the Convention on the Rights of the Child means to themselves and to others. An involvement in radio can also be a fast-track to understanding the responsibilities that are linked to rights.

Learning these skills builds confidence and self-esteem. It also demystifies and builds capacity for the communicators of tomorrow. Already the Internet is making it possible for those in countries beyond the perimeters of the developed world to have access. RealAudio is the key. News and information can be downloaded by online radio stations and sent on in the form of radio signal to stations that don't have computers. They in turn can radio back their own news and information to the "mother" station and have it uploaded to the Internet as RealAudio and made available to other stations around the world.

OneWorld Online (**http://www.oneworld.org/news/**) is the organisation that is running the pilot project. Current plans include an online children's and youth radio news and information exchange. 1998 will see many youth radio groups in different parts of the world connect on the OneWorld website in an innovative development that will make children's views and voices accessible to all the world's radio broadcasters and go even further towards implementing those articles of the Convention that protect rights to hold and express an opinion and have access to the media.

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Note

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Radio Gune-Yi, Senegal

Gune-Yi, meaning 'youth' in the Wolof language, is a production team which makes a 50 minute long weekly programme broadcast by children for children. The programme is aired on Senegalese national radio on AM and FM frequencies every Saturday at midday. It is funded by Plan International, has an expatriate advisor, Mimi Brazeau, and ties in with a popular young people's newspaper and Plan's child-sponsorship programme in Senegal. Its raison d'être is that while 60 per cent of the population are children, only 15 per cent of programmes on the radio are child oriented. The team has five core staff and the show costs $70,000 a year.

The programme is recorded in villages around the country. Its format includes news; a guest of the week; "What do you want to know?" feature; "Grandma tell me a story"; "Young Reporter" feature with a child reporting on his or her village; "Did you know" describing issues affecting young people including health and the rights of the child; "Listen, I've got something to say" a young person's message addressed to parents, teachers or politicians; "Have you read?" suggestions on African and other authors. There are also exchanges between young people in Senegal and abroad, debates on controversial issues such as girls' education and child labour, recipes, everyday tips, and jokes.

Education by example

The programme intends to education by example, through a process of self-discovery and confidence building for children. Promotion of the child is also done through always having girl as well as boy presenters. A female sociologist goes to each venue before the recording and does a socio-economic and cultural survey of the area, to identify the pertinent issues effecting young people.

There are indications that about 500,000 children and as many adults listen every week. The national station gives the programme free airtime, and refers to it as one of its "flagship" projects. The press is supportive, as are phone calls and letters. The production team sees increasing confidence amongst girls, school attendance has increased, and some listeners' clubs have formed spontaneously.

Entertainment and high quality

Mary Meyers, development communications consultant, who has completed the first media monitoring survey commissioned by the ICHR (International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting) Radio Partnership as part of its ODA (Britain's Overseas Development Agency) funded Creative Radio Initiative, believes the success of the programme is due to its entertainment value and high quality. "There is no doubt", she concludes, "that Gune-Yi's format and ethos of allowing the young to speak for themselves and to grow in confidence as a result, is a great example for other radio stations in Africa and beyond".

Source

Message on May, 15, 1997, from Gordon M. Adam, Deputy Editor of *Crosslines Global Report, The Independent Newsjournal on Humanitarian Action, Development and World Trends,* to the Creative-Radio Mailing List (radio@xlines.tiac.net).

Radio to Reach Young People in Denmark[1]

Polaroid is a catchy name that describes an attitude as well as a programme on radio that has caught the attention of a lot of young folk in Denmark. This documentary programme reflects upon young people's lives in the 1990s and seeks to lead listeners into the lives of others, to advise, to suggest, to learn. The programme has an open telephone line so that listeners can call *Polaroid* and participate actively on the spot and influence the debate and the development of the programme.

Polaroid aims particularly at 13-29-year-olds, although there is a slight bias to give more attention to 15-25 year-olds. The typical young listener of this radio programme has dreams about travelling around the world as a back-packer, he/she is a student, a so-called non-skilled worker trying just to earn some money, or he/she is young and unemployed receiving 'unemployment' money from the government. He/she has an attitude towards how the world ought to be organised but he/she would never dream of joining a political party or organisation. *Polaroid* addresses itself to young people who have an attitude towards themselves and the world they live in.

A voice for young people

Polaroid's objective is to influence the agenda setting for the debate about young peoples lives. The programme focuses on problems that have consequences for young people and gives voice to those who want to have a say on the subject. With its content, its debates and participating listeners, *Polaroid* aims at portraying young people's reality and to help those get back on the track that might have fallen by the wayside.

Danmarks Radio is a national public service radio and TV station. The radio has three programmes: P1, P2 and P3. *Polaroid* broadcasts on P1 every Tuesday from 2100h to 2400h. The people behind the production and the live programme of *Polaroid* are themselves young people of approximately the same age as their target group.

The tradition since 1973 has been that *Danmarks Radio* aims to ensure time for independent and 'free' voices. *Polaroid* also interacts with *Go*, a daily radio music programme broadcast from 1900h to 2100h for young people on P3 (known as the more entertaining programme) in the sense that just before *Polaroid* broadcasts on P1 on Tuesdays, *Go* mentions the content and the debate of 'this Tuesday's Polaroid' and plays spots from interviews that reflect the theme of the night. In this way *Polaroid* which is a serious, documentary and journalistic programme, is announced in the more entertaining music programme *Go*, which in effect brings *Go's* listeners to *Polaroid*.

Urgent issues

Among the kinds of issues *Polaroid* deals with is, for example, that the conflict between two groups of so-called Rockers – Hells Angels and Bandidos – has made public night-clubs and cafés unsafe places for young people to go to at night. Another example of *Polaroid's* debates is youth and unemployment. The programme goes behind postulates and myths such as: 'A young person can get a pistol in 3/4 of an hour', 'Young second generation immigrants are never allowed access to night clubs', 'You can buy anabolic steroids in any fitness or workout centre', 'A 15 year-old girl can easily buy alcohol in a bar at 4 o'clock in the morning', 'It is easy to obtain personal information about somebody with the help from a hacker'.

Polaroid also produces radio documentaries outside Denmark. Examples of subjects have been: Elections in England and the lack of participation from young people in politics; 'Rock the vote' project with rock groups such as 'Oasis' and 'Blur' who try to motivate the young people to participate; Why have young people lost belief in politics? How the young with their passivity indirectly influence the political future for Great Britain; Hip Hop band killings in USA; How young blacks from Ghettos are inspired by their idols to lead gang wars; Young Jewish men born and brought up in Denmark join the Israeli army to fight for their religious country. These documentaries are always followed up by a debate. Professionals are interviewed and listeners can call in and participate in the debate.

A special feature of *Polaroid* is the *Diary*. Polaroid arranges with someone who is facing a big change in his or her life, or has overcome a crisis or lived through a conflict with somebody, to talk about this experience. This is done outside the studio, on a tape recorder. The same procedure is used to 'illustrate' contrasts among young people in Denmark. For example, a young man in prison exchanges his life with an upper class young girl. He moves into her house and uses her car, and she goes to prison. Both are equipped with a tape recorder to reflect their views on the 'new' life.

Social awareness most important

The young people behind the production do not necessarily have to be professional journalists. It is more important that they have a social awareness. It is important, too, both for the form and the content of the programme that the producers are familiar with the subject matter and are ready to deal with the problems they will face. The fact that the producers and the hosts of the programme are also young, means that there is an understanding of and an almost 'automatic' sensitivity towards the problems, as well as towards the young persons who are reporting on their life situation in the documentaries. Style and content of the programme will automatically address the young listeners because there is a mutual understanding between the senders and the receivers of the messages in *Polaroid*.

A powerful medium

Young people with a desire to 'make radio' and with an urge to say something or tell a story to somebody, usually need only a basic introduction to making radio, to basic interview techniques, how to edit and how to prepare oneself as the host of the programme. That is enough for them to be able to produce a radio documentary programme and to be left with the responsibility of deciding the content of their programme and the broadcasting of it. The success of this programme also means that radio is still a powerful medium among the young in Denmark.

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Note

1. Project as related in Carlos A. Arnaldo and Helle Jensen, *Helping Young People Learn Media: a preliminary compilation of best practices*. Paris: UNESCO, 1997, pp. 17-19.

French Pupils Produce Radio Programmes[1]

Ocean represents an approach using informatics to produce sound programmes for radio or cassette listening. Hypermedia radio uses narratives, music or sounds digitally stored on a computer. A simple programme gives access to the files and allows the 'editor' to match files, mix, add, remove or otherwise edit and eventually 'mount' his/her sound programme. This involves not only some basic skills in radio production but also in multimedia informatics (hypermedia) by means of computer. The project aims to encourage media education in schools, using hypermedia radio as pedagogical tool for educators and teachers, but also for students.

The *Ocean* project works with school children from 9-11 years old. Classes produce a 13-20 minutes' radio programme with music mix every day. Because of hypermedia technology, it is possible today to perform quality editing of a radio programme – all sound cuts are digital. Artistry, of course, will depend on the ability of the children and of the guidance given by their monitor. The project has shown that the children, knowing they are 'on the air' with an audience listening, make an effort to structure their narration and to express themselves clearly. Thus it is also an exercise in written and oral presentation, and in this way one pedagogical objective is achieved.

Great enthusiasm and originality

The children have generally participated with great enthusiasm and originality. Like any project which is based on free expression it demands great investment (patience and time!) from the teacher, but the results often recoup well the effort invested.

Experiments in 1996-97 showed that children from 9-10 years were able to make a ten-minutes quality programme during a two and a half hours' work session. The children are completely autonomous in the use of the technology and the teacher/educator follows up as needed.

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Note

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Introducing Children to Journalism and Media, Argentina[1]

This project is managed by a media specialist working through public schools in the region of Buenos Aires, interested in or wishing to offer media education for children and young people by facilitating their access to work with and reflect upon media. The project favours especially less well endowed schools in difficult and poor areas. When all these schools have been covered by courses and media exercises, the project will be ready to service other schools, including private sector schools, and in other regions.

The objective is to introduce a new media pedagogy in the public schools and thus create an atmosphere of curiosity, participation, and passion for knowledge, all with the possibility of expression through various media – photography, newspapers, radio programmes, video and television. The project thus seeks to teach children that participation *is* possible, that nobody is unreachable even though it seems that they are far away, that their voices are worth listening to and thinking about.

The Co-ordination Centre works closely together with The General Directorate of Education of The City Council of Buenos Aires under the Secretary of Education. This co-operation has made it possible for the Centre to operate in 200 public schools in The Federal Capital of Buenos Aires, reaching in 1995 4,622 school children working on media projects.

Using media in learning situations

The Centre makes use of an important pedagogical innovation: a drastic change from the traditional pedagogical model to one based on student initiative and hands-on output. The Centre insists that the school as a social institution in today's information society needs to *rethink it's role* but at the same time recognises that the school provides a fundamental space for the development and education of the individual. The project attempts to meet that need by a process that introduces media in learning situations.

To do this, the project invites teachers and librarians to workshops to learn the production of graphic material, radio or audiovisual material and how to use these as a support or as a 'dynamiser' in the process of learning. The workshops concentrate on planning, communication, investigation, reflection upon the practice and the functions and the tools of each media. Afterwards each participant forms a group with pupils in his/her school. The workshop in the school makes it possible for the pupils to 'experience' journalism and media and to participate in working processes such as media criticism, finding sources, debates, selection of materials and the final editing of the broadcast. The workshop model and the media production thus creates active participation and a gratifying interaction between teachers and pupils.

In nine years, the Centre has organised more than 300 workshops in 200 schools. Over 250 teachers and 6,000 pupils were directly involved. The multiplier factor of this project has been very high over the nine years of the project, and could possibly be higher with additional technical equipment and human resources. The result is that several thousand young people now know how to prepare articles for a newspaper, make a radio programme, shoot a video and mount a television programme.

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A Pedagogical Kit for Learning About Television, Brazil[1]

This project, the Telespectator's Educational Programme, offers school teachers practical materials to implement media education activities in their courses and thereby provide to young people, 10-16 years old, the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss television and it's messages.

The project is a result of fruitful cooperation between the University of Brazil where the programme has been carried out and the International Centre of the Child (CIE) which has participated in the design of the programme and has supplied the biggest part of the financing. A multidisciplinary team of professors and students from the University of Brazil has been developed over two years. The project has also received support from the National Council for Scientific and Technical Development which has offered initiation grants for the students who participated in the project.

Enthusiasm among the students

The principal pedagogical method is self-activity. The young students read the text material and watch visualised 'lessons' on video, allowing them to reflect upon and to discuss problem matters such as, e.g., violence in the media. They can elaborate on a subject and carry out activities that are proposed in the video and in the text material. Those activities are, e.g., writing poems and creating a theatre play. Experience so far has shown that self-activity works. In general the young students participate with enthusiasm in the proposed activities. One positive experience using this Telespectator self-activity approach has been with poor adolescents from *Casa da Liberdade*, an institution which receives young street people free of charge and offers them activities to complement their normal school.

The philosophy behind the project is

that the integration of television in schools as a subject of study is as necessary as journalistic and literary texts are 'languages'. Apart from being a valuable pedagogical tool, television is another 'language', another means of expression which young students as television viewers should learn how to 'read' critically. This, in brief, is also the aim of the project.

In a first experiment, two hundred examples of the Kit were produced in 1992 at the university and they were sold out quickly. In 1995 a new edition has been prepared and two hundred and fifty new examples have been produced in order to respond to requests from educators. If this is as successful as early tests seem to indicate, the Kit should perhaps be produced in greater quantity, including an instructor's guide.

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Note

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International and Regional Declarations and Resolutions

Children and Media

BRATISLAVA RESOLUTION

The Bratislava resolution was adopted by the assembly, on the occasion of a gathering of producers, broadcasters and others interested in production for children, and in sharing experiences, East and West. Over 70 participants came from 30 countries. The meeting was called by CIFEJ, hosted by the Biennale of Animation, and held in Bratislava November 1994. For more information on the Bratislava gathering, see the Clearinghouse newsletter, News on Children and Violence on the Screen, No 1-2, 1997.

Soon, Mankind will enter the Third Millennium. The cinema will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Television is a little bit younger.

As we reach the crossroads of the year 2000, the importance of children's film continues to grow, as does the need for children to see these films. We can know that.

We live and will live, people from North and South, East and West, in a changing and dynamic world. Mankind will reach new heights in knowledge and in achievement. Children, who are our hope for the future, have the right to benefit from these general developments.

As specialists in children's cinema and television, we appreciate that the increasing impact of film, television and other media on our children demands more specific care and action with an aim to achieving better quality in the lives of the young people.

Good quality films and television programmes for children can and must carry positive fundamental human values. These will help and support the development of a personal conscience in young people, and add new dimensions to their basic social behaviour and to their knowledge of the world.

Good quality children's films and television programmes can and must encourage the process of creative thinking, of deciding and of acting in full liberty in order that children can build their own personalities and their future.

Good quality children's films and television programmes can and must reveal and stress the basic values of each people and of each nation, according to their traditions, the social and cultural backgrounds upon which they are founded, and the national identity of each country. At the same time, these nations must share these values with others in a general harvest of human spirituality.

Good quality children's films can also travel across borders, playing a leading role in the building of the world of tomorrow, helping to define the place in which our children will live.

For all these reasons, we think that the governments, the parliaments, the national and international agencies and organizations around the world must recognize, through support of production and distribution of children's films, a duty to the future of each nation and of the entire world.

There are several ways to achieve such goals:

- stimulating increased production of children's films and television, on a national level, by raising and investing more funds
- building a support system for wider and better distribution of those children's films whose artistic and educational values are more important than their commercial aspects
- encouraging the use on a large scale of production for children in schools and in other educational institutions and activities
- supporting the spread of quality children's screenings in all social areas
- financing and developing the education and training of specialists – scriptwriters, directors and others – of children's production
- stimulating and financing scientific research about the reaction of children to the media, and about the way they use media for their specific needs
- helping national and international professional organizations and associations dealing with the issues surrounding children's film and television to achieve and develop their activities.

We are sure that the governments, the parliaments, the national and international agencies and organizations are aware that supporting children's film and television production will serve the interests of each people, of each country, and will contribute to the building of a better world, one in which we would like to live in at the threshold of the Third Millennium. Never forget that any little thing done for children now is an investment in the future.

November 1994

THE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION CHARTER

1. Children should have programmes of high quality which are made specifically for them, and which do not exploit them. These programmes, in addition to entertaining, should allow children to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential.
2. Children should hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their language and their life experiences, through television programmes which affirm their sense of self, community and place.
3. Children's programmes should promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures in parallel with the child's own cultural background.
4. Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and content, but should not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex.
5. Children's programmes should be aired in regular slots at times when children are available to view, and/or distributed via other widely accessible media or technologies.
6. Sufficient funds must be made available to make these programmes to the highest possible standards.
7. Governments, production, distribution and funding organisations should recognize both the importance and vulnerability of indigenous children's television, and take steps to support and protect it.

May 29, 1995

The Children's Television Charter, was presented by Anna Home, Head of Children's Programmes, Television, BBC, at the first World Summit on Television and Children in Melbourne, Australia, March 1995. The charter was revised and adopted in Munich in May 1995. It is actively used by many organisations. A session at the Second World Summit will be devoted to the progress of the charter. For more information on the First World Summit, see the Clearinghouse newsletter, News on Children and Violence on the Screen, No 1-2, 1997.

SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter was adopted by the assembly of the Southern African Developing Countries' Summit on Children and Broadcasting, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in May 1996. The idea for a regional (SADC plus Kenya) forum grew from discussions about how to make the Children's Television Charter emanating from the First World Summit more relevant and applicable to Africa, and how to prepare for future representation at broader gatherings.

THE SADC CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING CHARTER

We, the people of the Southern African Developing Countries of Angola, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia, affirm and accept the internationally adopted Children's Television Charter which was accepted in Munich on 29 May, 1995.

Without detracting from the International Children's Charter, we further adopt, in line with the said Charter, our SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter, which takes into account the needs and wants of children in our region.

Children should have programmes of high quality, made specially for them and which do not exploit them. These programmes, in addition to entertaining, should allow children to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential. Whilst endorsing the child's right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, and protection against economic exploitation, children must be assured access to programmes and production of programmes through multi-media access centres.

Children should hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their language and their life experiences, through the electronic media which affirm their sense of self, community and place.

As part of the child's right to education and development, children's programmes should promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures in parallel with the child's own cultural background. To facilitate this there should be an ongoing research into the child audience, including the child's needs and wants which, as a matter of priority, should be implemented.

Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and content, but should not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex.

Children's programmes should be aired in regular slots at times when children are available to listen and view, and/or be distributed via other widely accessible media or technologies.

Sufficient resources, technical, financial and other must be made available to make these programmes to the highest possible standards, and in order to achieve quality, codes and standards for children's broadcasting must be formulated and developed through a diverse range of groupings.

SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter

In compliance with the UN policy of co-operation between states in the international community, and especially in the SADC countries, the Children's Broadcasting Charter recognises all international covenants, conventions, treaties, charters and agreements adopted by all international organisations including the UN and the OAU affecting children, but with particular reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

June 1996

ASIAN DECLARATION ON CHILD RIGHTS AND THE MEDIA

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, was held in Manila, the Philippines in July 1996. Delegates at the Summit – Including ministers and senior officials of Asian Governments, journalists, media executives, educators and child rights advocates from 16 countries adopted the Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media. For more information on the Asian Summit, see the Clearinghouse newsletter, News on Children and Violence on the Screen, No 1-2, 1997.

We, Ministers of Information, Education, Welfare and Social Development from 27 countries of Asia, Senior Officials representing the various government, executives, researchers, practitioners and professionals from various streams of media, non-governments organisations, advocacy groups and concerned individuals gathered in Manila for the Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media:

re-affirming our commitment to ensure implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as ratified in our countries;

acknowledging the developmental role, responsibility and power of all forms of media to inform, entertain, educate and influence; and,

recognising their potential for children and for social change.

NOW, THERFORE, RESOLVE THAT ALL MEDIA FOR OR ABOUT CHILDREN SCHOULD:

protect and respect the diverse cultural heritage of Asian societies;

be accessible to **all** children;

provide for the girl child and counter the widespread discrimination against the girl child; and,

provide for children with special needs; children in especially difficult circumstances, children of indigenous communities and children in situation of armed conflict

The Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media

RESOLVE ALSO, THAT ALL MEDIA ABOUT CHILDREN SHOULD:

adopt policies that are consistent with the principles of non-discrimination and the best interests of all children;

raise awareness and mobilise all sectors of society to ensure the survival, development, protection and participation of all children;

address all forms of economic, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse of children in the region and ensure that such efforts do not violate their rights, particularly their right to privacy;

protect children from material which glorifies violence, sex, horror and conflict; and,

promote positive values and not perpetuate discrimination and stereotypes.

RESOLVE FURTHER, THAT ALL MEDIA FOR CHILDREN SHOULD:

be of high quality, made especially for them, and do not exploit them;

support their physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development;

enable children to hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their languages and their life experiences through media which affirm their sense of self and community, while promoting an awareness and appreciation of other cultures;

be wide-ranging in genre and content, but not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex; and,

be accessible to them at times when they need and can use it.

RESOLVE FINALLY, THAT GOVERNMENTS, MEDIA, NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND OTHER LOCAL, REGIONAL AND HOLDING AGENCIES SHOULD:

provide media education for children and families to develop their critical understanding of all media forms;

provide opportunities for children in creating media and to express themselves on a wide range of issues relating to their needs and interests;

provide sufficient funds and resources to ensure access to and enable the production and dissemination of high quality materials

The Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media

for and about children as well as capacity building for media practitioners so that they could perform their role as developmental agencies;

promote regional and international cooperation through the sharing of research, expertise and exchange of materials and programmes, networking among government, non-government organisations, media organisations, educational institutions, advocacy groups and other agencies;

provide incentives for excellence through awards at regional and national levels;

provide coordinated monitoring mechanisms and encourage self-regulation at regional and national levels to ensure the implementation of this Declaration; and,

convene as early as possible broad national multi-sectoral consultations to develop action plans, including professional guidelines consistent with this Declaration.

Adopted, 5 July 1996
Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, Manila

AFRICA CHARTER ON CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING

The first All Africa Summit on Children's Broadcasting was held in Accra, Ghana, October 1997. The most important thing that came out of the Summit was an Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting. The Charter is in keeping with the international

Preamble

We, the delegates of the Africa Summit on Children's Broadcasting, Accra Ghana 8-12 October 1997, affirm and accept the internationally adopted Children's Television Charter that was accepted in Munich on 29 May 1995. In addition, we amend the SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter (June 1996) to read as the Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting.

Without detracting from the International Children's Television Charter, we further adopt in line with the said Charter and in the spirit of the said Charter, our Africa Charter on Children's

Children's Television Charter, but expands on the issues relevant to the African continent, and includes radio as well. In particular greater emphasis is placed on the educational and developmental needs of African children and protection from all forms of commercial exploitation.

Broadcasting, which takes into consideration the needs and wants of children in our region.

1. Children should have programmes of high quality, made specifically for them and which do not exploit them at any stage of the production process. These programmes, in addition to entertaining, should allow children to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential.
2. Whilst recognising that children's broadcasting will be funded through various mechanisms including advertising, sponsorship and merchandising, children should be protected from commercial exploitation.
3. Whilst endorsing the child's right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, and protection against economic exploitation, children must be ensured equitable access to programmes, and whenever possible, to the production of programmes.
4. Children should hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their language and their life experiences, through the electronic media which affirm their sense of self, community and place.
5. Children's programmes should create opportunities for learning and empowerment to promote and support the child's right to education and development. Children's programmes should promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures in parallel with the child's own cultural background. To facilitate this there should be ongoing research into the child audience, including the child's needs and wants.
6. Children's programmes should be wide ranging in genre and content, but should not include gratuitous scenes, and sounds of violence and sex through any audio or visual medium.
7. Children's programmes should be aired in regular time slots at times when children are available to listen and view, and/or be distributed via other widely accessible media or technologies.
8. Sufficient resources, technical, financial and other, must be made available to make these programmes to the highest possible standards, and in order to achieve quality, setting codes and standards for children's broadcasting must be formulated and developed through a diverse range of groupings.

Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting

9. In compliance with the UN policy of co-operation between states in the international community, the Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting recognises all international covenants, conventions, treaties, charters and agreements adopted by all international organisations including the OAU and the UN affecting children, but with particular reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

11 October 1997
Accra, Ghana

Regulations and Measures

Regulations and Measures Concerning Visual Media and Child Protection

An Overview of Europe, North America, Australia and Japan

COMPILED BY TITTI FORSSLUND

When trying to make a compilation of regulations on visual media and child protection, I found the problem highlighted on the agenda in many countries all over the world. Laws and regulations are being amended, declarations are written and various measures are being tried out. The most regulated media are the cinema and national television (whereas satellite television channels often are outside national or regional control). Measures for the protection of minors in relation to the new electronic and digital media are discussed or under way. The protection of children against harmful media content most frequently concerns gratuitous violence, sex and coarse language (and child pornography). In this overview concerning visual media, advertising is not included.

I will present some examples of regulations and measures in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan. The overview is far from complete, but only a first draft. It is mostly based on earlier documents and compilations, complemented with a few personal contacts. Therefore, many data are lacking, and corrections, comments, additions, and extensions are most welcome for a future, more comprehensive overview.

Regulations

Apart from legislation, in the area of protecting children from being exposed to harmful media content, there are various systems:

- Regulatory authorities, including certain obligations concerning the portrayal of violence and indecency among the licensing conditions.
- Recommendations, e. g., the Council of Europe recommendation, a politically but not legally binding measure on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media.

- The industries' self-regulation, codes of conduct and internal guidelines, elaborated by individual broadcasting companies or by associations of broadcasters, e.g., the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU's) Guidelines for Programmes when Dealing with the Portrayal of Violence,[1] the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming,[2] and the Japanese public service broadcaster NHK's Standards of Domestic Broadcast Programmes.[3]

Definition of children

When talking about children and protection of minors the definition varies. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – ratified by all nations but the USA and Somalia (1997) – is valid for children below the age of eighteen.

In Canada, "children" in the Rules for Children's Programming refers to persons under 12 years of age.[4] In Australia "children" refers to people younger than 14 years of age, in Japan programming for children means up to about 15 years. The Netherlands, France and Belgium define a "minor" as a person under the age of 16, Germany and the United Kingdom as a person under 18.

General broadcast policies and child protection

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, discussing "the child and the media" in 1996, identified three main areas, which were further considered in a Working Group in April, 1997: Child Participation in the Media, Protection of the Child against Harmful Influences through the Media, and Respect for the Integrity of the Child in Media Reporting (see the second article by Thomas Hammarberg in the first section of this book). Among the recommendations were:

> 6. Constructive Agreements with Media Companies to Protect Children against Harmful Influences: Facts should be gathered about various attempts of voluntary agreements with media companies on positive measures such as not broadcasting violent programmes during certain hours, clear presentations before programmes about their content and the development of technical device – like 'V-chips' – to help consumers to bloc out certain types of programmes. Likewise, experiences of voluntary ethical standards and mechanisms to encourage respect for them should be assembled and evaluated; this should include an analysis of the effectiveness of existing Codes of Conduct, professional guidelines, Press Councils, Broadcast Councils, Press Ombudsmen and similar bodies.

Many European countries, both eastern and western, within and outside the European Union, refer to the EU directive *Television without Frontiers*, adopted in 1989 and amended in 1997. The new directive provides for a set of rules concerning protection of minors:[5]

> Article 22:
>
> 1. Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that television broadcasts by broadcasters under their jurisdiction do not include any programmes which might seriously

> impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular programmes that involve pornography or gratuitous violence.
>
> 2. The measures provided for in paragraph 1 shall also extend to other programmes which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, except where it is ensured, by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure, that minors in the area of transmission will not normally hear or see such broadcasts.
>
> 3. Furthermore, when such programmes are broadcast in unencoded form Member States shall ensure that they are preceded by an acoustic warning or are identified by the presence of a visual symbol throughout their duration.
>
> Article 22 a:
>
> Member States shall ensure that broadcasts do not contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality.

Article 22 b states, among other things, that the Commission within one year shall carry out an investigation of the possible advantages and drawbacks of further measures with a view of facilitating the control exercised by parents or guardians over the programmes that minors may watch.

Further, The European Convention on Transfrontier Television documents the responsibilities of the broadcaster in Article 7:[6]

> 1. All items of programme services, as concerns their presentation and content, shall respect the dignity of the human being and the fundamental rights of others.
>
> In particular, they shall not:
> a. be indecent and in particular contain pornography;
> b. give undue prominence to violence or be likely to incite to racial hatred.
>
> 2. All items of programme services which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of children and adolescents shall not be scheduled when, because of the time of transmission and reception, they are likely to watch them.
>
> 3. The broadcaster shall ensure that news fairly presents facts and events and encourage the free formation of opinions.

In Australia, the Broadcasting Services Act from 1992, sets objectives for television and radio broadcasting services. One of the objects of the Act is

> to ensure that providers of broadcasting services place a high priority on the protection of children from exposure to programme material which may be harmful to them.

In Canada, five guiding principles underlying the approach of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), an independent organisation established by the Broadcasting Act, are identified:[7]

> 1. Abandon an ideological, legalistic and therefore combative approach in favour of a co-operative strategy recognising TV violence as a major mental-health problem for children.
>
> 2. Adopt the goal of protecting children, not censoring adults, in order to strike a reasonable balance between the right to freedom of expression and the right of children to a healthy childhood.
>
> 3. Stick to a focused agenda on gratuitous or glamorised violence, not diffusing efforts by adding sex, foul language, family values, specific feminist concerns or other distinct, more controversial issues.

> 4. Bring all players to the table – broadcasters, advertisers, producers, parents, teachers, psychiatrists and the regulator.
>
> 5. Have both a short-term and long-term perspective.

In Japan the Broadcasts Law requires broadcasters to establish standards for programming and to set up consultative committees to ensure that programmes satisfy the stated standards. The public service broadcaster NHK states in its Standards of Domestic Programming:[8]

> Under no circumstances shall acts of violence be permitted. (...) Human life shall not be treated with contempt and neither shall the act of suicide be glorified. (...) Criminals shall not be portrayed attractively and acts of crime shall not be treated with approval (...).

From the United States I can not find any direct policy statement on violence in television. There is a general ban on child pornography (as elsewhere) and obscene material, operating at both Federal and State level. The ban on obscene material applies essentially to sex-related photographic and video material. But the First Amendment (constitutional principle of freedom of speech) can also be applied to speeches inciting hatred or discrimination, provided that they do not constitute an immediate danger to people or goods.[9]

"The FCC is not interested in influencing, or even knowing, the content or viewpoint of any programming", said former Chairman Hunt of the Federal Communications Commission[10] in his speech at a conference on Children and Television in 1997. However, in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, TV manufacturers are required to incorporate the V-chip in the sets, which is combined with a rating system made by the broadcasters (see under the headline "V-chip" below).

In Canada, there is a public worry about the massive influx of American programmes delivered via cable, which cannot be stopped from entering Canadian homes. In the USA broadcasters set the standards, and any government intervention to control violent contents is frowned upon.[11]

Measures

Ratings/classification

All kinds of measures to prevent children from exposure to certain media products require some kind of classification of the media product, be it television programmes, films, videos, computer games, etc. This is a crucial issue; the criteria for classification varies and the systems of classification differ among countries, within countries and between various media.

Descriptive classifications, indicating the *content* of individual programmes rather than giving a recommendation of the *age* of the child who should see it, is being asked for in many countries, whereas so far the age rating is the most common. In the USA, research indicates that recommendations for movies like "PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned" and "R: Restricted" may run the risk of attracting younger viewers instead of discouraging them.[12] The former X-symbol for ratings of pornographic movies in the USA is nowadays sometimes used as a promotion tool.[13]

Since some kind of classification/rating system is always used as a base for other measures, I do not, in the tables of measures in different countries below, explicitly mention rating/classification.

To understand the tables, I here make a first review of the measures, illustrated by examples:

Scheduling: time, watershed

"Scheduling" means that TV programmes, promotion materials, etc., which are classified as unsuitable to children, are broadcast "later" in the evening (often called a "watershed"). This "later", when children are not supposed to watch television, varies, however, between 19.15 and 24.00. Also varying is the age of the children who should not watch television after a certain time. Ages mentioned are from up to 12 years to up to 18 years (Irving & Tadros, 1996, 1997). Examples:

after 19.15	Bosnia and Herzegovina (after Bedtime story 19.00-19.15)
after 20.00	Switzerland (16 years following cinema rules, 18 years after 23.00); UK
after 20.30	Australia (15 years)
after 21.00	Canada (12 years); Ireland (15 years); Netherlands (16 years); Denmark; Finland; Sweden
after 21.30	Greece
after 22.00	Germany (16 years, 18 years after 23.00); Latvia; Slovak Republic; Spain; USA
after 22.30	France (16 years)
after 23.00	Albania (14 years); Italy (14 years); Bulgaria; Poland; Romania
after 24.00	Macedonia

Age limits

Age limits for television programmes are not often explicitly stated. The contrary is the case for film and video shown in public – for these media age limits or the similar are stated in most countries included in this overview. There are also often age limits for video rental or purchase, and in some countries for computer/video games and other audio-visual media.

Advice: oral or written consumer advice

In Australia, for example, with M- or MA-rated programmes (M = mature, A = adult) on television, there are cautionary messages under the letter symbol on the screen with some detail of why the programme has been rated M or MA: "depicts violence", "contains coarse language", "depicts sexual scenes", etc.[14] The written script is accompanied by a voice over, saying the same thing.

Advisories are also broadcast by the public service broadcaster TVO in Canada at the beginning and "if necessary at appropriate intervals" during each programme containing violence.[15]

In Austria, as another example, the public service broadcaster ORF provides printed television guides with advice for parents on the suitability of programmes for young viewers.[16]

In Poland, the broadcasters are required to inform viewers or listeners of the nature of the programme, when advertising the programme and just before transmission. This information should specify that the programme may negatively affect the psychological, emotional or physical development of children and teenagers, according to the National Broadcasting Council, Act on Radio and Television.[17]

In Romania, Article 2 of the National Audio-visual Council Directives underpins the risk of the "forbidden-fruit-effect", requiring the announcements for "adult" programmes be adopted to protective measures for minors and that they "must not be accompanied by commentary liable to heighten their interest in viewing these programmes".[18]

Warning: acoustic or visual warnings

An acoustic warning before the start of an unsuitable television programme, and/or a visual symbol throughout its duration is used in a few countries. Warnings are also presented in the timetable/schedule.

France, for instance, has adopted a warning system overseen by the Audio-visual Superior Council. A green circle symbolises programmes containing certain scenes which could be harmful to young children; an orange triangle is used for films not allowed to children under 12 years of age and to caution audiences; a red square is used to indicate adult-only programming.[19]

In Italy, Channel 5 uses a similar "traffic light" signalling system: green for family, yellow for parental guidance, while red indicates that the show is not suitable for children.[20]

In Canada, viewer advisories are provided for at the beginning of and during the first hour of programmes containing "scenes of violence intended for adult audiences".[21]

Labelling

Concerning video cassettes, CD-ROM's and other audio-visual material in, for example, Germany, the classification must be clearly indicated on the cassette jacket as well as on the object itself. Items that have not been classified or have been classified as "18 and over" may not be offered to children and young people in any way.[22]

Descriptive information about violence, sex and language in programming, similar to food labelling, which provides information about food ingredients without commenting on who should or should not eat those ingredients, is recommended in a report by Joel Federman (1996).[23]

V-Chip

The anti-violence "V-chip" is a microchip, which can be incorporated in a television set, a cable selector or a decoder. It reads the classification code of each programme that is rated. The viewer can programme the chip to block the signal of programmes with a classification which exceeds the level considered acceptable. For example, if the viewer selects level 3, then levels 4, 5 and above will not appear on the screen.

This technology was developed by Professor Tim Collings at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, and is now being tried out in the USA and Canada. In the United States the Telecommunication Act was amended in 1996 to require TV manufacturers to incorporate the anti-violence chip into their products from 1998. Since 1996, the industries involved have been working on the introduction of a programme classification and encoding system which the V-chip can decode and which began being implemented in January 1997.

As there is a high percentage of U.S. programming in Canada, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council states that for a V-chip based rating system to be a truly effective tool for parents in Canada, it must be applied also to U.S. services and non-Canadian cable services distributed in Canada.

The U.S. kind of rating system has been criticised for its diversity and lack of specificity of content and for its risks to increase rather than reduce children's exposure to harmful programming. Earlier research indicated that children were more eager to see a movie labelled "PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned" and "R: Restricted", than a movie labelled more by content, e.g., "mild violence" and "graphic violence".[24]

In July of 1997, as a result of intense pressure from parents, child advocacy organisations and members of Congress, the U.S. television industry agreed to modify its rating system to add letters to the age-based system. The letters indicate whether the rating level was due to sex, violence, coarse language or sexual dialogue. The amended ratings were implemented in October of 1997. All major networks except NBC are using the amended rating system.[25]

In Canada the Action Group on Violence on Television (AGVOT), a group representing the broadcast industry, has developed a classification system for the English language broadcasters in Canada, currently being considered by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). In August 1997 AGVOT unveiled the graphic icons which are used to identify the ratings on screen and in TV listing publications. The French language programmers in Canada will use their own established ratings systems, as had been agreed to by the CRTC.[26]

In Europe the V-chip technology is under consideration and it is obvious that there will not be an easy task to develop a rating system that all countries can agree upon.

Outright prohibitions

Several countries also have outright prohibitions on certain material in all media:

- material containing incitement to hatred, discrimination or violence
- obscene material
- material contrary to sound morals and indecent material
- material detrimental to human dignity
- child pornography, either generally defined (obscenity, indecency, etc.) or specifically defined (child pornography, protection of children against sexual abuse, etc.).

On the current agenda

The Internet

The European Commission is drafting a "Communication" (COM (96) 483) and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Illegal and Harmful Content on the Internet. Illegal material, such as child pornography, falls under existing laws and can be punished accordingly. As part of this work, the Commission has launched a "discussion forum" on the Internet, "to encourage networking of organisations and individuals actively establishing measures to ensure the protection of minors and human dignity in audio-visual and information services". The forum can be reached on the Internet at **europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/avpolicy/forum/index.html.**[27]

In Norway, the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children and Save the Children have initiated a project with the aim of identifying pedophile networks. Everyone can report about web-sites, ftp-servers, chat channels, etc., relating to child pornography or pedophile activity. The information will be passed on to the Norwegian police, who co-operates with Interpol.[28]

Need for media education

Many different aspects of media education are relevant to the protection of minors and human dignity in the new media services. Schools still need to provide more encouragement for the acquisition of skills in the use of all kinds of media. Measures to improve parental awareness and information as to the various types of harm to which their children may be exposed are an inevitable corollary to their increasing level of responsibility.

Need for research

When reading about a South African research study on children's emotional responses to television, which shows that half of the surveyed children are made unhappy and uncomfortable by children's programmes aimed specifically at them,[29] and about British research which establishes that programmes that provoke negative emotional responses are diverse and unpredictable,[30] I would like to argue for more empirical research on children's reception of media. There is a lot to learn for parents, teachers, broadcasters, media producers and distributors – and for politicians.

Tables

The measures "Scheduling", "Age limits", "Advice", "Warning", "Labelling" and "V-chip" for various audio-visual media, as well as the "outright prohibitions" will now be included in tables for different countries. Additional comments are sometimes made.

For the fifteen countries in the European Union (EU) in Table 1(page 342), the information in the first column of the table emanates from a study commissioned by the EU Commission.[31] Much of the information in the other columns in the tables for the European countries is gathered from Joan Irving and Connie Tadros (1996) *Creating a Space for Children. Volume 1. Children's Film and Television in EU-countries* and (1997) *Creating a Space for Children. Volume 2. Children's Film and Television in Central and Eastern Europe,* International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ), Montreal. These and other sources are referred to in the footnotes.

For western European countries outside the European Union, there are fewer sources. A blank square in Table 2 (page 346) means that I have no information – not necessarily that there is no relevant measure. Table 3 (page 347) comprises measures in Australia, Canada, Japan and the USA. Table 4 (page 350) for measures in eastern European countries is the most scarcely documented table.

Table 1. Measures in EU-countries

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Outright prohibition of certain material in all media</th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td>Austria</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling;
Advice</td><td>Age limits: 6,10,12,14,16,17,18</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Each province has its own laws and regulations.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Belgium</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Contrary to sound morals;
Child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling;
Warning</td><td>Age limits: 12, (+adult),16</td><td>Labelling</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The French-speaking Community Television of Broadcasters has adopted a code of ethics, which proposes that broadcasters provide warning signals before transmitting violent programmes.
The classification of films must be labelled on the jacket of the video cassettes for hire or purchase.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Denmark</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 7,12,16</td><td>Labelling;
Age limits: 12,16</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Scheduling: An informal watershed of 21.00 is used by the Public Service Television DR and there is also a standard provision for all broadcasters that those programmes which are considered harmful to minors can only be shown after midnight.[37]
Labelling: Films and videos are classified by the Danish Film Censorship Board. Videos sold or rented shall be labelled with information as to their suitability for children and young persons aged under 12 or 16.</td></tr>
</table>

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<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Outright prohibition of certain material in all media</th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finland</td><td>Incitement to hatred,
discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Child pornography (general)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 12,14,16,18</td><td>Age limits: 16,18</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">According to the Act of Film Censorship and the Act Relating to the Inspection of Video and other Audio-visual Programmes, visual media must be classified by the State Board of Film Censorship or the Finnish Board of Film Classification.</td></tr>
<tr><td>France</td><td>Incitement to hatred,
discrimination, violence;
Child pornography (general)</td><td>Scheduling;
Warning</td><td>Age limits: 12,16, X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">According to the Film Classification Act 90-174, X-rate is for pornographic films or those inciting to violence. This rating involves a prohibition for minors under 18 years of age, and screening is only allowed in specially licensed cinemas.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Germany</td><td>Incitement to hatred,
discrimination, violence;
Detrimental to human dignity;
Child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 6,12,16,18</td><td>Labelling:
Age limits:
6,12,16,18</td><td>Labelling:
Age limits:
6,12,16,18</td><td>Age limits:
6,12,16,18</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The public service television ARD and ZDF are self-regulating on issues of youth protection. Private broadcasters have created FSF, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Fernsehen, for their self-regulation concerning youth protection. FSF and FSK, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft, classify films, videos, CD-ROMs and other audio-visual material.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Greece</td><td>Obscene material;
Contrary to sound morals;
Child pornography (general)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Film is regulated by the Commission Responsible for the Supervision and Control of Publications Destined to Children and Adolescents, under the authority of the Minister of Justice: "Publications (...) must not contain any illustration, article, story, title or insert presenting in a favourable light banditry, lying, thievery, laziness, cowardice, hate, any criminal act, or act that demoralises children or juveniles (...) or inspires or instils ethnic prejudice."[33]</td></tr>
</table>

Ireland	Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence; Obscene material; Contrary to sound morals; Child pornography (general)	Scheduling	Age limits: G, PG,12,15,18	Age limits: G,PG,12,15,18		
Italy	Obscene material; Contrary to sound morals; Child pornography (general)	Scheduling; Warning	law			
A commission under the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment is charged with the interpretation of the laws making reference to human rights and the rights of minors. The commission evaluates and rates films for their potential to harm young people.[34]						
Luxembourg	Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence; Obscene material; Child pornography (general)		Age limits: 14,17			
Netherlands	Child pornography (specific)	Scheduling; Warning	Age limit: 16	Age limits: 12,16		
Portugal	Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence; Child pornography (general)	Scheduling; Warning	Age limits: 4,6,12,16,18	Age limits: 4,6,12,16,18		
The transmission of pornographic or obscene programmes or programmes which incite violence, the practice of crimes or whatever in a general way violates rights, liberties or fundamental guarantees is not permitted, according to the Television Law. Films and videos must be classified by the Entertainment Classification Commission, subject to the Ministry of Culture.						
Spain *(continuing overleaf)*	Child pornography (specific)	Scheduling; Warning	Age limits: 7,13,18, X	Age limit: X	law	law

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<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Outright prohibition of certain material in all media</th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Spain...
The classifications are recommendations but cannot be used to deny persons younger than the classified age to entry cinemas. X-rated films depicting pornography or extreme violence can be shown only in X-rated cinemas, where persons under the age of 18 are not allowed entry. The X classification is valid for video, as well.
Law 6/28, March 1995, prohibits the sale or rent to minors of video games and other audio-visual materials that contain messages contravening rights recognised in the Constitution or containing violence, delinquency or pornography.[35]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sweden</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence; child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 7,11,15</td><td>Age limit: 15</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">According to the Examination and Control of Films and Videos Act (SFS 1990:886), all films shall be examined and approved by Statens Biografbyrå, the national Board of Film Classification, prior to exhibition. For videos intended for sale or hire, the advance examination is voluntary. The Board does not take any action on religious or political grounds. Its task is to judge whether films or sequences are liable to have a brutalising effect on the audience. The distribution of certain scenes of violence is a criminal offence under the law on freedom of expression.[36]</td></tr>
<tr><td>United Kingdom</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Contrary to sound morals;
Child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: Uc, PG,12,15,18, R18</td><td>Age limits: Uc, PG,15, 18, R18</td><td>Labelling;
Age limits:
3-10,11-14
15-17,18+</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) classifies films and videos: "U-films" are suitable for all ages and "no theme, scene action or dialogue could be construed as disturbing, harmful or offensive". "Uc" denotes "particular suitability for younger children". Parental guidance, "PG", denotes that "some scenes may be unsuitable for younger children as a result of mild violence, some nudity (...) and language". "R18" means restricted distribution through special authorised film clubs or sex shops.
Computer and video games are classified and labelled at an initiative from ELSPA, the European Leisure Software Publishers Association, on a voluntary basis.</td></tr>
</table>

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Table 2. Measures in Western European Countries Outside EU

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Outright prohibition of certain material in all media</th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td>Cyprus</td><td></td><td></td><td>Age limits: 13,18</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The Censorship Committee classifies each film in category 1: for all ages; category 2: not for persons under thirteen; or category 3: not for persons under eighteen. Films that, e.g., contain material likely to offend against the religious or national feelings of any of the communities or that contain horror and brutality are rejected, according to the Cinema Films Law.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Iceland</td><td></td><td></td><td>Age limits: 10,12,14,16</td><td>law</td><td>(law)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">According to the law (No. 47/1995) every film shown in cinema or rented or sold on video shall be classified by the Icelandic Board of Film Classification. The Board does not make any cuts in films, but totally bans very violent films.[37]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Norway</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
child pornography (specific)</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 7,11,15,18</td><td>Labelling</td><td>law</td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The Norwegian Broadcasting Act is in accordance with the EU Television Directive. According to the Act relating to Films and Videos, 1987, films shown in cinema shall be classified by the Norwegian Board of Film Classification and must not violate public decency or have a brutalising or morally corruptive influence.
Computer games including moving photographic images are covered by the Film and Video Act.[38]
Regarding Cable transmissions, the Statens Medieförvaltning can ban the local distribution of emissions from other countries sent from Norwegian soil, which regularly show pornography or violence in defiance of Norwegian law. Pornography is defined as "sexual depictions which are offensive or which could otherwise be perceived as being humanly degrading or debasing, including sexual depictions involving children, animals, violence, enforcement or sadism."[39]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Switzerland</td><td></td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits: 16,18</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Scheduling: According to Guidelines for Violence in Programming of the Schweizer Fernsehen, DRS.[40]</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3. Measures in Australia, Canada, Japan and the United States

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>O.:tright prohibition of certain material in all media</th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td>Australia</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Child pornography</td><td>Scheduling;
Advice;
Warning</td><td>Limits: PG,M,MA,R</td><td>Advice;
Labelling</td><td>Limits:
G8+,M,MA
Advice;
Labelling</td><td>Advice;
Labelling</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Children's media environment in Australia is supported by a combination of legislation, regulation, self-regulation and persistent community advocacy. The Australian Broadcasting Authority, ABA, has since 1992 co-regulated the classification system through the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice which relies primarily on self-regulation. FACTS, the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, has a joint common code and set of classification criteria, which are subject to a three yearly review. ABC and SBS, the public broadcasting services in Australia, have their own Acts, Charters, Codes of Practice and Complaints procedures, containing obligations to the child audience.
The film/video (since 1984) and computer game (since 1994) industries are required to submit material to the OFLC, Office of Film and Literature Classification, for classification before they can be shown or sold.[41] The ratings include Consumer Advice, which informs the public as to the rational for a given rating. This consumer information is required by law to appear in advertisements for videos or films, and on the covers of video tapes for sale or rental. Rating categories are: G8+ for interactive electronic games suitable for children 8 years or older; M for media suitable for persons 15 years and over; MA for more advanced media content and titles with this classification may not be sold, rented or demonstrated to persons under 15 years of age. R – restricted to persons 18 years or older – is for films or other media and is not allowed for television broadcasting.[42]
Technical blocking devises, e.g., the V-chip is under industry consultations. Other measures are also under consideration.[43]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Canada</td><td>Incitement to hatred, discrimination, violence;
Obscene material;
Child pornography (general)</td><td>Scheduling;
Warning;
V-chip</td><td>Limits: PG,AA,R</td><td>Limits:
PG,AA,R</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The Canadian Radio Television Commission (CRTC) is responsible for implementing the policy outlined in the Broadcasting Act. CRTC works closely with the industry in the development of standards on issues like television violence, gender portrayal, cultural-minority rights as well as programmes and advertising aimed at children.
Different provinces have different film classification systems, all based on age and judge criteria, like violence, nudity, sexuality and language.[44] For example, the Ontario Film Review Board acts under the Ontario Theatres Act and classifies films into four categories: Family – appropriate for all ages;
(continuing overleaf)</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7">Canada...
Parental Guidance; Adult Accompaniment – restricted to people over 14 years of age or to people younger than 14 when accompanied by an adult; Restricted – viewing is restricted to persons 18 years or older. Many provinces use the same classification system for video as for film.[45]
The V-chip is now being tried out in Canada, as mentioned above.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Japan</td><td>Incitement to hatred,
discrimination, violence;
Obscene material</td><td>law</td><td>Age limits: 15,18</td><td>Age limits:
15,18</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The Broadcast Law of Japan regulates both the public service television and radio, NHK, and the commercial stations "...to make broadcasting contribute to the development of healthy democracy". The law requires broadcasters to establish standards for programming and to set up broadcast programme consultative committees to ensure that programmes satisfy the stated standards. The NHK Standards of Domestic Broadcast Programmes from1959 says in article I, Section 6-3: "Under no circumstances shall acts of violence be permitted."[46] The production of violent or obscene material for export, however, is not illegal in Japan.[47]
Japan Board of Film Classification classify films, and Japan Video Ethics Association and EIZORIN (Association of Moving Image Code of Ethics) classify videos in three categories: General; Restricted – 15 years or over; and Adult – over 18 years of age.[48]</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>USA</td><td>Obscene material;
Child pornography (general)</td><td>V-chip</td><td>Limits: PG, PG-13,13, R, NC-17</td><td>Age limits:
13,17</td><td>Limits:
EC,K-A,
T,M,AO;
Labelling</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">The United States has a general ban on child pornography and obscene material, operating at both Federal and State level. The ban on obscene material applies essentially to sex-related photographic and video material.[49]
Television is not regulated as to violence, but the V-chip technology is being implemented as a parental control device, as mentioned above.
Films are rated by CARA, the Classification and Ratings Administration – a division of the Motion Picture Association of America, MPAA, that is, a film industry trade group. The symbols related to the age limits and similar mean: PG – Parental Guidance Suggested; PG-13 – Parents Strongly Cautioned; R – Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC – No Children 17 and under are admitted.
All movie advertising, previews/trailers, are approved or disapproved by the MPAA, based on their suitability for viewing by children.[50]
As regards cable television, four U.S. premium cable networks have developed a content advisory system: MV – Mild Violence; V – Violence; GV – Graphic Violence; RP – Rape; AL – Adult Language; GL – Graphic Language; BN – Brief Nudity; N – Nudity; AC – Adult Content; SC – Strong Sexual Content. The labels appear both on the air and in programme guides. A movie may receive different advisory labels on different stations, as each network labels its own programmes.[51] <i>(continuing overleaf)</i></td></tr>
</table>

USA...

Regarding computer/video games, the Entertainment Software Board, an independent board established by the Interactive Digital Software Association, classifies software for all platforms: EC – Early Childhood; K-A – Kids to Adult, suitable for persons 6 years and older; T – Teen, 13 years and older; M – Mature, 17 years; AO – Adult Only, the products are not intended to be sold or rented to persons under the age of 18.

A second rating system was developed by RSAC, The Recreational Software Advisory Council, an independent, non-profit organisation comprised of various non-industry representatives including parents and teachers. Their Advisory Committee, comprising of media researchers, psychologists and other experts advises in developing and implementing the Game Ratings Programme. Classification icons on title packaging will appear in the form of thermometers, with four "temperature" readings, representing the four levels of intensity for each behavioural category. In addition, specific descriptors can accompany the icons, e.g. "bare buttocks", "blood and gore", "obscene gestures".

Table 4. Measures in Eastern European Countries

For the for former eastern European countries, less information is documented. The information in Table 4 is gathered from Joan Irving and Connie Tadros (1997) *Creating a Space for Children - Volume 2. Children's Film and Television in Central and Eastern Europe*, The International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ), Montreal.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>TV</th><th>Film/video in public theatre</th><th>Video rental or purchase</th><th>Computer video games</th><th>Other AV-media</th></tr>
<tr><td>Albania</td><td>Scheduling</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Azerbaijan</td><td></td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">The Penal Code 1982, article 228-1 (adopted 1996) says: "For public protection, the distribution of films promoting violence and cruelty is liable for a prison term of up to two years or a fine of the equivalent of 700-800 times minimum wage."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Belarus</td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">The Law of the Republic of Belarus Concerning Media and Other Means of Public Information contains an article prohibiting the use of media for the presentation of pornography or anything else against any violation of morality, honour and dignity of the citizens. The Law Concerning Television and Radio currently under consideration contains certain regulations aimed at protecting the rights of young viewers and listeners.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bosnia & Herzegovina</td><td>Scheduling</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Bulgaria</td><td>Scheduling</td><td>Age limits</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Croatia</td><td>Scheduling</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Czech Republic</td><td></td><td>Age limits</td><td></td><td></td><td>Age limits</td></tr>
<tr><td>Estonia</td><td></td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td>Georgia</td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Hungary</td><td>Scheduling;
Warning</td><td>law</td><td>law</td><td></td><td>law</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">The law defining public broadcasting obliges the network to "show programmes which serve the physical, intellectual and mental development of minors".</td></tr>
</table>

	TV	Film/video in public theatre	Video rental or purchase	Computer video games	Other AV-media
Latvia	Scheduling; Warning				
Lithuania	Scheduling	law	law		law
Macedonia	Scheduling	law coming			
Moldova	law				
Poland	Scheduling; Advice	"Age limits"	"Age limits"		
No cinema or video rental outlet may release a film unless it has a classification, although this business is self-regulating.					
Rumania	Scheduling				
The Audio-visual Council of Rumania has adopted a directive on measures for the protection of minors aimed to harmonise Rumanian legislation with the European directives "Television without Frontiers".					
Russian Federation	"Scheduling"	certificate	certificate		
In Russia the protection of children and youth is addressed in The Law on Mass Media of 1991 and The Law on Advertising of 1995. "Scheduling" means that broadcasting scheduling is only valid for erotic programmes. Film and video distributors must apply for a state distribution licence and take their own responsibility for showing only films with distribution certificates, according to Regulations for Public Demonstration of Films for Theatrical and Video Release.					
Serbia					
The public broadcaster, Serbian Broadcasting Corporation (RTS), has internal regulations to ensure that children do not view violent or pornographic shows.					
Slovak Republic	Scheduling	Age limits: 15,18	Age limits: 15,18		Age limits: 15,18
Film and video production and distribution are subject to the Audio-visual Law from 1995.					

	TV	Film/video in public theatre	Video rental or purchase	Computer video games	Other AV-media
Slovenia	"Scheduling"				
There is no rating system for cinema access or video films, but exhibitors decide on their own if some films are not suitable for children under 15. "Scheduling" means that broadcasting scheduling is only valid for erotic programmes.					
Ukraine	law				
The Ukrainian Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 1993, Section V, article 4.1 states: "Programmes (films) that can damage the physical, psychological or moral development of minors are forbidden."					

Notes

1. These EBU Guidelines are reproduced after the article.
2. Canadian Association of Broadcasters, 1993.
3. Kodaira, 1996.
4. Canadian Association of Broadcasters Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming.
5. The new "Television without Frontiers" Directive. Internet, November, 1997.
6. *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, 1997.
7. Caron & Jolicœur, 1996.
8. Kodaira, 1996.
9. Green Paper on the Protection of Minors…, 1997.
10. Hundt, 1997.
11. Flagan, 1992.
12. Trotta, 1997.
13. *Control, Examination and Censorship of Films*, 1993.
14. Barrie McMahon, e-mail, November, 1997. See also table 3 including Australia.
15. TVOntario, 1996.
16. Irving & Tadros, 1996.
17. Irving & Tadros, 1997.
18. ibid.
19. von Feilitzen, 1997.
20. Irving & Tadros, 1996.
21. Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, 1997.
22. Irving & Tadros, 1996.
23. Trotta, 1997.
24. Cantor, 1997.
25. Cantor, Joanne, e-mail, December, 1997.
26. Media Awareness Network. Internet, December, 1997.

27. Celsing, 1997a, 1997b.
28. Waage & Aasli, 1997.
29. Ramsden, 1997.
30. ibid.
31. ibid.
32. ACT, Association of Commercial Television in Europe.
33. Irving & Tadros, 1996.
34. ibid.
35. ibid.
36. *Film Censorship in Sweden*. The National Board of Film Censors.
37. Icelandic Board of Film Classification.
38. The Norwegian Government's campaign..., 1995.
39. Statens Filmtilsyn, Oslo, 1996.
40. DRS, Praktischer Richtlinien für die Programmierung.
41. Biggins, 1997.
42. Federman, 1996.
43. Young Media Australia, 1997.
44. Caron & Jolicœur, 1996.
45. ibid.
46. Kodaira, 1996.
47. Green Paper on the Protection of Minors..., 1997.
48. Oeda, 1996.
49. Green Paper on the Protection of Minors..., 1997.
50. Federman, 1996.
51. ibid.

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Celsing, Anna (1997b) European Policy News on TV and Internet. *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, Vol. 1, No. 3.

CRTC, Canadian Radio Television Commission. Internet, November 1997.

CRTC, Canadian Radio Television Commission. Internet, November 1997.

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THE EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION'S GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMMES WHEN DEALING WITH THE PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE

1. WATERSHED

Programme-makers and schedulers should always take into account the transmission time of their programme when considering matters of content.

Scenes of violence may well make a programme inappropriate for an early placing because of its unsuitability for viewing by children.

In order to avoid any confusion in this matter by the viewing public in general, and parents in particular, there should be a clearly understood watershed at an appropriate time during evening viewing, before which all programmes should be suitable for audiences consisting of a high proportion of children. Parents must accept that responsibility for what their children watch after the watershed lies in large measure with them.

2. NEWS AND FACTUAL PROGRAMMES

News and information broadcasts have of necessity to deal on a daily basis with social conflicts in which violence can be a part. The audience should not, and cannot, be protected from this everyday occurrence. Actual violence is acceptable in news programmes as broadcasters have a duty to show factual violence in the world, but the negativity of such acts should be stressed.

News should and will shock viewers at times. With some news stories a sense of shock is part of a full human understanding of what has happened, but care should be taken never to discomfort viewers gratuitously by over-indulgence. The more often viewers are shocked, the more it will take to shock them.

One person's shock is another person's news or art. Thus, a decision in this field means striking a balance between the current social consensus on what is acceptable and the broadcaster's duty to reflect reality as he or she sees it.

In particular, the human dignity of the victim as well as those also affected must not be offended and their personal rights must be respected. Violence in factual programmes should not be so prominent or commonplace as to become sanitized. The public cannot be shielded from the violence which happens daily in the world, but it must be portrayed in the most sensitive way possible.

The degree of violence in news programmes must be essential to the integrity of the programme; care should be taken in the choice of material depending on the time of day at which bulletins are broadcast.

3. FICTIONAL AND ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES

Television drama must be able to reflect important issues truthfully, and violence is part of both nature and society. Drama on television involves the collaboration of many different skills and creative talents. In any collaboration there must be editorial judgement.

Since conflict and its associated violence are somewhat ingrained human traits, they are often made the central component in fictional and entertainment programmes. What is crucial is that the reasons for the existence of violence in the treatment should be portrayed in a plausible manner and violence should not be used in a purely unprovoked manner to entertain and as a way of maximizing the audience.

Gratuitous violence must be proscribed. The more intense the violence, the greater should be the distancing from reality. The aim should be how little violence is necessary without undue dramatic compromise.

The effects of portraying violence are heavily dependent on the form this presentation takes and the dramatic context. Particular care must therefore be taken with realistic presentations with which the viewer may more easily identify. Details of violence and aggressive behaviour which invite imitation should be avoided.

Portrayals which trivialize, or indeed glorify, the use of violence, whether physical or psychological, and which present violence as a means of overcoming conflicts, should also be avoided at all costs. It is important that in addition to the causes of violence their destructive consequences should also be shown, and that the use of violence as a way of solving problems should be portrayed critically. Not all violence is physical. Non-physical violence can also be upsetting and shocking, especially to children. This is an important area where particular care should be taken, as is the portrayal of sadistic violence.

Scheduling of fictional and entertainment programmes containing violent scenes is important and adequate warning must be given.

4. PROGRAMME ACQUISITIONS

Acquired programmes should conform to normal editorial policy.

Violence in distant settings can be relatively less shocking, disturbing or liable to dangerous imitation.

Broadcasters, however, are committed to the vigilant exercise of control; acquisitions should be abandoned if they are incapable of being adapted or edited to conform to guidelines.

Broadcasters will need to ensure the right to edit overtly violent acquisitions before transmission.

Accurate description in promotional material is essential.

5. PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people can be particularly sensitive to violence and brutality. Generally speaking, those rules valid for the totality of the public should be applied in a much stricter manner at times when the audience is more particularly made up of children and adolescents.

Programmes aimed at children should treat the portrayal of violence, both physical and non-physical, with particular caution. Special care should be exercised and careful scheduling is necessary.

In programme choices, programmes should be preferred which propound a positive attitude to life, human values, and non-violence.

Young children do not fully understand the subtleties of good and bad and will readily commit themselves to one side in a conflict. Violence as an easy way of resolving conflict should be avoided. Care should be taken with domestic violence, both physical and verbal. The danger of imitation should always be borne in mind.

When portraying conflicts and violence it should be taken into account that young children are less able to perceive television programmes in their entirety than adults, that they align themselves much more powerfully to individual, visual surface appeal and only gradually become able to differentiate between central and peripheral aspects. Children identify with characters on an emotional level more readily than adults and the corresponding reactions such as fear are stronger and last longer.

The same rules apply to fantasy as to realistic dramas. Care should be taken not to cause anxiety and undesirable tension nor to incite aggressive behaviour.

In news reports, attention should be given to the likely impact, particularly on children viewing alone, of coverage of violence and its consequences.

Programme-makers should clearly understand that moral attitudes and values only emerge gradually throughout childhood, so children and young people are easier to influence than adults.

Programmes should take care therefore not to undermine the moral development of minors.

6. PROGRAMME TRAILS AND SIGNPOSTING

Programmes containing scenes of violence may be required to be preceded by a detailed warning announcement, but overuse of warnings can render them ineffective. They should not be used as disclaimers against the programmes that follow.

Prudence must be exercised in respect of promotional material and the transmission time of a trail must always be borne in mind.

Trails should honestly reflect the type of programmes being trailed.

Violence as a means of promotion of programmes should not be permitted. Taking violent scenes arbitrarily out of context may shock viewers unfairly.

It may be legitimate to let viewers know if the film or programme being trailed does contain violent scenes, but there is a fine line between effective description and exploitative come-on.

7. ADVERTISING

Advertising should not use violence as a means to sell a product nor as an incitement to violent behaviour. Since children up to a certain age are far less able than adults to recognize the intentions of advertising, and to judge it critically, they are therefore open to influence to a greater extent. Advertising should not exploit the weaknesses of young consumers by using either fear or violence.

The Children's Television Charter

Assessing the Feasibility of Global Consensus for Television Policy

JOANNE M. LISOSKY

It is no good having fine ideas and fine ideals, unless you can make them stick.

Anna Home, Head of Children's Programmes, Television, BBC,
referring to the Children's Television Charter
(World Summit on Television and Children, Melbourne, 1995)

Speakers from around the world met in London in March 1998 for the Second World Summit on Television for Children. One of the primary aims of the Summit was to evaluate and assess the impact of the Children's Television Charter that was first publicly discussed at the World Summit on Television and Children in Melbourne in 1995. This Charter marks a unique step in global policy-making, but the question remains as to whether it is possible to reach consensus on a policy that will possess the "teeth" to make a difference while being universally applicable to various nations.

Due to publication deadlines, it is unknown at the time of writing this article what occurred at the Second World Summit in London, but the outcome was, no doubt, similar to what happened in Melbourne in 1995 when the Charter was first discussed. At that time, numerous advocates from many nations offered suggestions to augment and improve the Charter. Issues like advertising exploitation, cultural perspectives, and government subsidies for children's programming were discussed in a special session by over twenty participants from Malaysia, Canada, Britain, Australia, France, Vietnam, as well as other countries. Consensus emerged that there was a need for this ambitious universal policy. But gaps occurred in the chorus on several of the mentioned issues. However, there appeared to be one area where global convergence had been broached. In this Summit session and throughout the 1990s, many nations have addressed the need, and several have introduced legislation, to mitigate the influence of television violence. While the 1980s were characterized by a trend toward deregulation and a detachment from traditional public service obligations, the 1990s have been marked by an increase in global attention toward the control of violent television content (Hoffmann-Riem, 1996).

In fact, many countries have been engaged in discussions about media violence since (at least) the 1940s. A number of basic questions were pursued which led to a large-scale government inquiry in the United States in the 1960s. By the 1970s, children's television advocates vociferously questioned violent images on television and their impact on impressionable children. More recently, the television violence debate has escalated in several nations. Organizations like the Action Group on Violence on Television in Canada, the Council on Media Violence in Sweden, and the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, sponsored by UNESCO and the Swedish government, have emerged to promote research and discussion about the issue of media violence. Discussions surrounding violent television content have ultimately led to questions of government's role in regulating the medium and the messages.

Debates focusing on the proper role of any government in implementing policies for controlling violence on television have been heated and riddled with controversy in recent years. Rules and regulations concerning the proliferation of unsavory media images have undergone a series of revisions over the last twenty years in nearly every nation in the world. Balancing the needs of the broadcast industry, the duties of the broadcast regulators and a unique set of cultural, economic and political values in a country have resulted in distinct national policies regarding the control of television violence. However, while many nations agree on the need to control violence on television, strategies to enact this control have been unique in each nation.

In research comparing children's television regulations in Australia, Canada and the United States (Lisosky, 1997), it was posited that national broadcast policies are founded on the evolution of factors within each nation. By peeling away the fundamental factors that influence controls over violent television content, certain criteria emerge, generally characterized as systemic, ideological, economic and political. More specifically, whether the national broadcast system was originally based on a social responsibility or private enterprise model provides an example of a systemic factor that will influence television policy regarding the control of violent programming. How a nation protects freedom of expression or the degree to which a society may be willing to allow the government to constrain the television industry, serves as examples of ideological factors observed in every nation debating the control of violence on television. The balance of power among a nation's regulatory agency, industry lobbying groups and citizen advocates demonstrates the fluctuation in political factors that influence media policy. Finally, how each nation defines violence or violent programming will have a strong impact on the regulatory strategies that are developed to mitigate this programming. These fundamental factors exist in some manner in all nations struggling to formulate a children's television policy. Each critical criterion can, thus, serve as a salient point to assess the possibility of a global consensus.

For that reason, any comprehensive, global policy designed to address the issue of regulating violent programming will need to be cognizant of the distinct factors that have influenced policy debates for individual societies. In order to design universal policies that may address normative standards for television violence or any other issue, examination of the criteria that have influenced the debates and subsequent policies among several nations would serve to inform the policy makers. Moreover, observing alternative solutions to common problems affords the broad vista needed to make informed judgments about the present status and future prospects of global policies.

One way to observe these diverse strategies is to examine multinational responses to a single television series. During the 1990s, an internationally-syndicated program attracted the attention of citizens, governments and broadcast policy-makers around the world and demonstrated how different nations responded to the same television content. The incident focused on the U.S. series, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* (Lisosky, in press). In the mid-1990s, the series was broadcast in over 30 countries and subsequently found itself in real-life battles with regulatory agencies, and in some cases private citizens, because of its perceived violent content.

Nations' different responses to Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

Ironically, the program itself was a morphin, with much of the action footage lifted from a long-running Japanese television program, *Jyu Rangah*. Reportedly, much of the original Japanese violence was toned down for the U.S. audience (Cody, 1994).

A number of countries that acquired the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* (MMPR) series from the Los Angeles based Saban Entertainment in the 1990s, found that the program was not compatible with national regulations or cultural norms regarding televised violence. For example, in England, a mild public outcry ensued when a four-year-old was karate-style kicked by a playmate imitating the *Power Rangers* (Orvice, 1994). This led the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents to issue a warning that the series was "extremely dangerous".

Other European nations responded to the *MMPR* with more severe action. In October, 1994, a young girl's brutal killing by teenage boys in Norway fueled public debate over the causes of violence in Scandinavian society. In response, *MMPR* was immediately taken off the air. The ban was temporary, however, and the program returned.

Earlier in 1994, Television New Zealand (TVNZ) pulled the *MMPR* off the air on the advice of the Broadcast Standards Authority, a statutory broadcast watchdog group ("TVNZ Dumps…", 1994). The Authority had reacted to complaints from a citizen advocacy group. Even though TVNZ had edited out some of the violent confrontations and the network had added pro-social public service announcements to the conclusion of each program, the Authority claimed that these changes were not enough.

Also in 1994, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC), ruled that MMPR, estimated to be the most popular children's television show in Canada, was too violent for Canadian television (Lacey, 1994). The CBSC had been spurred to review the *MMPR* by the complaints from two Canadian parents. The CBSC unanimously agreed that the program contravened several articles of the industry's Voluntary Code Regarding Violence. As a result, a youth cable channel, YTV, canceled *MMPR* and the Montreal-based French TVA network dropped the series. Subsequently, Global Television, a commercial satellite network and part of CanWest Global, requested permission from the program's producers, Saban International, to alter the program to conform to Canadian criteria (Farnsworth, 1994). After a year of editing the violent content, CanWest dropped the series as well.

In January 1995, the *Power Rangers* came under attack from the German Society for the Protection of Children. The Society called for the program to be banned for excessive violence due primarily to complaints by German kindergarten teachers who charged that the program promoted child nightmares (Kindred, 1995).

Authorities in Malaysia banned the popular children's program in December 1995 in a dispute over its title. The Deputy Home Minister said that the title words "Mighty Morphin" may cause children to associate the characters with the drug morphine, leading them to believe that "the drug could make them strong like the characters in the show" ("Mighty Morphins...", 1995).

After reviewing three episodes of *MMPR* in 1995, the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) stated that two episodes of the series contained scenes that did not comply with the general audience classification that was originally given the series (ABA, 1995). The network airing the series in Australia was allowed to continue to screen the *Power Rangers* during children's viewing time, as long as certain scenes were edited out.

In contrast to these national responses, U.S. reactions to the program were remarkably positive. In 1994, *Parenting Magazine* named *MMPR* as one of the ten best children's television programs on the air. In addition, newly elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, shook hands with the Power Rangers in 1994 and remarked that *he* was a Power Ranger ("Nightline...", 1995).

Children's Television Charter – the first step

These responses to the *MMPR* series demonstrate the range of television violence policies and illustrate how various nations find unique strategies to address the issue. Distinctions are found in the rationale for controlling the violent images as well as the strategies employed to mitigate the violent content. This example also illustrates that while consensus exists among most nations about the need to attend to the violent content on television, policies on how to control violent content may not be converging. Granted, some recent strategies have what appears to be universal appeal. Many nations have embraced actions like sanctioned media literacy programs, watershed stipulations, industry self-regulation, content ratings and the V-chip as strategies to tone down violent content. However, these approaches are not endorsed universally and have differing outcomes when implemented in different countries. For example, many agree that in order to control the dissemination of violent television content, broadcasters should adhere to watershed stipulations. Critics, however, claim that these time, place and manner restrictions merely allow broadcasters more freedom to air extremely violent programming during late evening hours. Moreover, critics of the V-chip suggest that this technological advancement relieves broadcasters of any responsibility in scheduling violent programming.

While children may be watching the same television programming around the world, strategies for regulating television content are not universal. The *MMPR* example as well as other research (Lisosky, 1997), show that policies to mitigate unsavory content are closely aligned with cultural factors. Thus, it is suggested, to make the ideas and ideals of The Children's Television Charter stick, it will be necessary to discuss and assess more than current policies. Any broad-reaching global policy may need to first examine the historic, systemic, ideological, economic and political factors that influenced the development of television policies across several nations to assess the possibility of convergence.

Finally, in their quest to develop a universally acceptable policy for children's television with teeth, and one devised to adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the designers of the Children's Television Charter may have another looming problem. This problem is analogous to the elephant in the parlor everyone strains to ignore. While the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely accepted human rights instrument ever, protecting the rights of approximately two billion children worldwide, it has not yet been ratified or acceded by the United States. As a result, the impact of the Children's Television Charter may turn out to be, as Janet Holmes à Court of the Australian Children's Television Foundation suggested at the World Summit in Melbourne, "the rest of the world against America – not because we're anti-American, but because we are pro-Aboriginal, pro-Filipino, pro-Pole, and for the rest of the children in the world" (transcript from recordings made at the World Summit, 1995).

Despite the struggle to find consensus and the lack of U.S. participation in the UN Convention, the developers of the Children's Television Charter should not be dissuaded from pursuing a comprehensive policy. Children will continue to watch television, in some cases – like the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* – the same television programming around the world. As a result, it will become increasingly necessary for policy-makers to find the balance of social responsibility of broadcasters not only from within each country but among various nations. The Children's Television Charter is the first step in this arduous process to seek global consensus for the sake of all children.

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